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ABSTRACT

The New York State hearings (held on May 10-11, 1984, in New York City) reported on in this document focused on three areas of public education considered key to inequity: the denial of equal access to school resources, the denial of equal quality in the learning process, and the denial of open futures in the link between school and work. The testimony offered at the hearings by student and parent advocates, community and civic activists, and teachers and administrators (who are listed in a separate section) is organized into five sections: (1) the economic and social conditions of the school crisis; (2) the underfunding of school services; (3) the problems and dilemmas of an unequal system; (4) new approaches to and recommendations for school improvement; and (5) conclusions for the advocacy movement. The general conclusions are fivefold: (1) school failure is not inevitable; (2) school failure is an issue of public choices and commitments, not of rejected opportunities; (3) the results of resource denial and inequity are manifest everyday in the classroom; (4) the ingredients of school improvement and effectiveness are known; and (5) raising standards and requirements for student performance without raising the level of fiscal, administrative, and instructional support for school improvement will exacerbate school failure. It is concluded that equity remains the central issue in the pursuit of excellence in public education. (RDN)

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OUR CHILDREN AT RISK

Samuel James

REPORT
OF THE
NEW YORK
HEARING
ON

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THE CRISIS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

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The New York Hearing Report was prepared by Ann Bastian and Norm Fruchter, who served as coordinators of the New York Hearing in May 1984, assisted by Leslie Carr and Daniel McGlone. The project was directed by Jane Stern, Executive Director of Advocates for Children, and by Janet Price, AFC Senior Attorney, with support work contributed by the entire AFC staff.

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THE REPORT OF THE NEW YORK HEARING ON OUR CHILDREN AT RISK: THE CRISIS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Issued by Advocates for Children

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INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

A year ago, in the midst of the general outcry over the state of our schools, a national network of youth and education advocates found we shared a growing fear. Our misgivings were not that the deficiencies of public schooling were suddenly receiving great attention. Most of us had been working for many years to bring the issues of school reform before the public eye, and all welcomed the new debate that a wave of commission reports and media coverage had engendered. The fear that reform advocates felt was that this debate was engaging too narrow a spectrum of voices, focusing on too limited a set of problems, encouraging short-sighted views of the solutions.

The crisis in public education was being defined as a crisis of "mediocrity," of declining standards and achievement which threatened the economic status of both individuals and the nation. Dire pronouncements were sounded about our inability to keep up with new technologies and global competition. What has been missing is concern for the enormous number of students our schools have been failing all along, concern for those whose economic future has been persistently shortchanged. What has been missing is a sense that at the root of school failure is not only the compromise of excellence, but the neglect of equity--and the sense that quality and equality in education go hand in hand.

For the crisis in public education has been with us a long time, if we measure the potential of education as a vehicle of opportunity and democratic values for our society. More than a problem of computer literacy is involved, when studies at Columbia's Teachers College tell us that 13% of all 17 year-olds are functionally illiterate. More than a problem of stricter graduation requirements is involved, when at least 28% of our children never finish high school, and more than 50% drop out of inner-city schools. More than a problem of "back to basics" and academic rigor is involved, when over half of the students eligible for compensatory education cannot get it, when two-thirds of non-English speaking students are not provided with special language services, when funds to the poorest school districts continue to be cut.

And what has been missing in the debate corresponds to the voices that have been left out of it. The prestigious national studies have not included the school constituents, those who daily confront school failure and the need for change. They have not included the parents whose children are underserved, the communities which are underfunded, the frontline educators who fight against losing odds, the advocates and activists who find themselves up against bureaucratic inertia and political indifference. Finally, and most importantly, the people left out are the children at risk, the permanent victims of chronic school

crisis--poor children, inner-city kids, minorities and young women, students with special needs and handicapping conditions, the children of migrant workers. There are many dimensions to school improvement in this diverse nation, but we are not going to gain much ground if the problems of the disadvantaged are not a central priority of change--we will simply refashion a two-tiered system of education.

So we who are advocates for the children at risk made the decision to enter the debate, to broaden the voices and issues of reform, to join with others who fear that equity in education is getting lost in a one-sided quest for excellence. Through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS), a Board of Inquiry was formed to conduct public hearings across the country, an inquiry into the crisis of educational disadavantage. The Board was co-chaired by Harold Howe II, former US Commissioner of Education, and Marion Wright Edelman, head of the Children's Defense Fund. The hearings focused on three areas which are key to inequity: the denial of equal access to school resources, the denial of equal quality in the learning process, and the denial of open futures in the link between school and work--access, quality, jobs.

In New York, the public hearing on "Our Children at Risk: The Crisis in Public Education" was organized by Advocates for Children (NYC) and co-sponsored by Statewide Youth Advocacy (Rochester), both NCAS affiliate organizations. It was held on May 10-11, 1984, at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York City, before a State Board of Inquiry which included local community and education leaders as well as representatives from the National Board. The Hearing drew testimony from over 40 student and parent advocates, community and civic activists, teachers and administrators, all deeply engaged in school reform efforts.

Together these witnesses offered a unique survey of the needs, conflicts, innovations and potentials defined by direct experience in New York schools, which we have used as the basis for this report. While the bulk of the testimony covers conditions in New York City, the nation's largest school system, we found many parallel patterns and developments in the rest of the State, and many models for school improvement in projects across the country. The material is wide-ranging, and even so does not cover all possible issues, but it does convey the clear message that we must tackle the crisis in student achievement by examining the entire school system and its relation to our community needs and social values. In approaching this rather sweeping task, we have organized our findings in the following five sections:

A. Economic and Social Conditions of School Crisis

B. Underfunding School Services

C. Problems and Dilemmas of an Unequal System

D. New Approaches to School Improvement

E. Conclusions for the Advocacy Movement

Within these topics, readers will find many issues familiar to school change advocates: imbalanced school aid formulas, understaffing, fragmented social services, cutbacks in entitlement programs, discriminatory testing and tracking practices, teacher burn-out, disorderly and demoralizing school environments, parent exclusion. Taken as a whole, the discussion of specific issues produced a great deal of common ground around some basic conclusions.

(1) School failure is not inevitable. There are indeed growing societal pressures on the schools resulting from rising poverty and underemployment, from increased social distress and changing family patterns. Yet testimony at the Hearing documented that where supportive resources are available, effective school programs have been established in the most deprived communities. The fact that these successes are not more widespread indicates the magnitude and complexity of change required throughout the system, not that the particular learning needs presented by disadvantaged children are the source of school crisis.

(2) School failure is an issue of public choices and commitments, not of rejected opportunities. Hearing witnesses demonstrated time and again that fiscal inequity is an underlying cause of inadequate schooling, a precondition of failure. New York City, which has 34% of the state's school enrollments and a student population with the highest levels of disadvantage, still receives only 30% of state funding. Federal education cutbacks and block granting have hit the inner cities the hardest. Schools with the highest drop-out rates receive a lower percentage of aid allocations.

(3) The results of resource denial and inequity are manifest everyday in the classroom, a demoralizing reminder to both teachers and students that their efforts are little valued by society at large. Children are placed at risk by overcrowded classrooms, by intolerable staff-to-student ratios, by crumbling school facilities, by impersonal learning environments, by the lack of supportive social services and even basic supplies, by outmoded and inflexible curricula, by our failure to attract and reward a capable teacher corp.

(4) The ingredients of school improvement are not a mystery. The single, most frequently cited factor for reversing school failure was securing high expectations for achievement among teachers, administrators, students and parents. Yet, high expectations are directly related to very tangible reforms in school practice and policy. One key ingredient is opening the schools to meaningful parent and community involvement, which has had significant impact in establishing a positive school climate. Another dimension of success is replacing the factory structures of schools with smaller classes, more personal contact between students and teachers, and learning programs which account for and respect individual and cultural diversity. Successful programs consistently provide high levels of supportive services within the school, addressing learning and social needs through integrated and collaborative approaches.

Effective schooling combats the stigmas and self-fulfilling prophesies which are produced by rigid tracking and the segregation of students through "creaming" and "dumping" mechanisms. Effective schooling also addresses the patterns of institutional discrimination, which victimize minority, female, special needs students, and low-income students. However, not one of the ingredients of school improvement cited at the Hearing can be achieved on a widespread scale unless new commitments are made to both funding and re-structuring school services.

(5) Raising standards and requirements for student performance, without raising the level of fiscal, administrative and instructional support for school improvement, will exacerbate school failure. To create new barriers for school attainment and more selective mechanisms for advancement, when existing urban systems already underserve over half the children enrolled, will succeed only by pushing more students out. The Hearing focused particularly on the implications of the 1984 New York State Regents Action Plan, which imposes more strenuous academic requirements, but has not yet answered the need to substantially increase state aid and insure that all students will have the means to meet its new standards.

If there is a single theme in these conclusions, it is that equity remains the central issue to the pursuit of excellence in public education. Equity is not just an matter of access, the right to attend school, although even this historic battle is far from universally won. Equity is not just a matter of being given the opportunity to achieve, if such "opportunities" are delivered by second-class schools which cannot serve students according to their needs. Equity means a commitment to two fundamental values in public education: that all children have the right to learn--and that the quality of our schools and our society depends on making that right a reality.

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Special Assistant to the Executive Director,
United Federation of Teachers NYC

Note: The affiliations cited for the Board of Inquiry members and Hearing witnesses represent their organizational positions at the time of the Hearing, May 10 and 11, 1984.

WITNESSES TO THE NEW YORK HEARING AND AREAS OF TESTIMONY

LAURA ALTSCHULER: Repesentative of the Educational Priorities Panel (EPP); Education Chair, League of Women Voters; past president of local school Parent Associations. Testimony: public school finance.

DEBORAH BELL: Assistant Director, Department of Research and Negotiations, District Council 37, American Federation of State, County, Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Testimony: labor market trends and school-to-work linkages.

GEOFFREY CANADA: Education Director, The Rheedlan Foundation; Member, Educational Priorities Panel. Testimony: truancy and truancy prevention programs.

MICHAEL COONEY: English Teacher, James Monroe High School, Bronx; Chapter Chair, United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Testimony: teaching conditions and needs.

MYRNA COOPER: Director, NYC Teacher Centers Consortium; former educational specialist for the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Testimony: in-service teacher training programs.

RICHARD DANIELS: Student, Truman High School, Bronx; Member, Upward Bound Program, New York University. Testimony: student experiences in special education and the need for mainstreaming.

DR. ARCHER DONG: Principal, Dr. Sun Yat Sen Intermediate School, Manhattan; Member, Commissioner Ambach's Advisory Council on Bilingual Education. Testimony: bilingual education and the Asian community.

EILEEN FOLEY: Director of Educational Studies, Public Education Association (PEA); Member, School Attendance Coalition. Testimony: drop-out prevention programs and alternative schools.

HOWARD GOLLUB: Director, UFT Special Educator Support Program; former special education teacher, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Testimony: in-service training programs for special educators.

LEONA GORDON: Chair, New Rochelle District Parent Advisory Council; First vice-chair, State Parent Action for Compensatory Education (SPACE). Testimony: parent rights and participation in public schooling.

NORMA GLUCK: Regent, New York State Board of Regents; Member, United Parents Associations. Testimony: Regents' Action Plan to Improve Elementary and Secondary Education Results in New York.

JOSIANE GREGOIRE: Student, Midwood High School, Brooklyn; Youth Advocate for Youth Engaged in Social Change (YES Change). Testimony: school discipline and student rights.

KIM HARE: Coordinator, Western New York Protection and Advocacy Outreach Office, Project of Monroe County Coordinating Group on Developmental Disabilities; former Director, Judicial Process Commission. Testimony: special education needs in rural areas.

VEOLA HAWKES: Chair, Rochester Youth Board; Member, Task Force on Violent and Disruptive Behavior in Rochester Public Schools sponsored by the Rochester Urban League; Dean, Benjamin Franklin Junior-Senior High School. Testimony: needs of disadvantaged youth at risk of exclusion.

PAULA J. HEPNER: Director, Educational Rights Project, Public Education Association (PEA); Member, Citizens' Advisory Council of the NYS Assembly Task Force on the Disabled. Testimony: equity for disabled students.

JANICE R. JENKINS: Graduate, High School of Graphic Communication Arts, Manhattan; Senior Youth Advocate for YES Change; Member, Chancellor's Advisory Commission to Promote Equal Opportunity and Member, Full Access and Rights to Education (FARE). Testimony: sex discrimination in vocational education.

DR. EVELYN JONES-RICH: Principal, Andrew Jackson High School, Queens; Co-chair, Education Committee, Coalition of 100 Black Women; Executive Board, High School Principals Association. Testimony: low expectations and poor achievement.

RAE LINEFSKY: Assistant Executive Director, Federation of Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS); Member, NY Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Employment and Training Council. Testimony: vocational development, drop-out prevention and the findings of Operation Success.

DR. DALE MANN: Professor and Chair, Department of Educational Administration, Teachers College, Columbia University. Testimony: the effective schools movement, teacher preparation, and school-to-work linkages.

DR. GLORIA MATERA: Director, Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Genesco Migrant Center; Professor of Education, SUNY Genesco. Testimony: educational needs of migrant children.

LISA FERGUSON MARTINEZ: Student and peer counselor, South Brooklyn Community High School; former drop-out, John Jay High School, Brooklyn. Testimony: drop-out prevention and alternative high schools.

DEBORAH MEIER: Director, Central Park East Public Elementary School; Chair, Children's Division, Educational Alliance; Editor, Dissent. Testimony: the impact of standardized testing on expectations, equity, achievement and curriculum.

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY: Director, Advocacy for Childcare, Inc.; Chair, Board of Advocates for Children, NYC; Director of Public Policy for the National Black Child Development Institute, NY affiliate. Testimony: early childhood education services.

JON MOSCOW: Board Member, Project PEACE (Parents Empowered to Advocate for Children's Entitlements); parent organizer and officer, Parents Association, PS 86 (Bronx). Testimony: parent activism and the role of parent associations.

DR. PETER J. NEGRONI: Superintendant, Community School District 12, Bronx; Adjunct Professor, Administration and Supervision, City College. Testimony: equity issues of school improvement and vocational opportunity.

NATHAN QUINONES: Chancellor, New York City Public Schools; former Director of the NYC High Schools Division, principal and teacher. Testimony: the equity needs of New York City schools.

MARGARET RAUSTIALA: Assistant Director for Downstate Coordination, the New York Society for Autistic Children; parent of an autistic child; high school and college educator. Testimony: educational rights and needs of parents with children in special education programs.

DR. LUIS O. REYES: Special Assistant to the Executive Director, ASPIRA of New York; Member, Puerto Rican/Latino Education Roundtable, EPP, and Chancellor's Advisory Commission for Educational Opportunity. Testimony: the ASPIRA study of New York City dropouts.

RHODA SCHULZINGER: Attorney and Staff Director of the Full Access and Rights to Education Coalition (FARE) for the Center for Public Advocacy Research. Testimony: sex segregation in vocational education and teen pregnancy issues.

ADELE SHAPIRO: Attorney and Assistant Director, Long Island Advocacy Center; Coordinator, Protection and Advocacy Office for the Developmentally Disabled for Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Testimony: exclusion and tracking issues for disadvantaged and handicapped children.

GLORIA SKERRITT: Vice President, United Parents Associations; past President, President's Council. Testimony: alternative approaches to remediation, promotion and retention policies.

DR. HOWARD STANBACK: Assistant Professor of Economics, New School for Social Research; former Assistant Dean, University of Connecticut School of Social Work; Coordinator, Minorities Institute. Testimony: youth employment and labor market trends, economic development and school-to-work linkages.

JUDY THOMAS: Resolutions Chair, NYS Parent Teacher Association (PTA); Member, NYS Education Reform Task Force. Testimony: school finance and the public funding of non-public schools.

MONIQUE TORAN: Student, Herbert H. Lehman High School, Bronx; Member, Foundation for Youth Involvement (FYI). Testimony: findings of Foundation for Youth Involvement student poll on educational quality.

Also testifying or submitting written remarks were:

GORDON M. AMBACH: President, University of the State of New York; New York State Commissioner of Education. Testimony: NYS Regents Action Plan.

MATTIE EVANS: Member, Phi Delta Kappa Big Sister Education Access Center, Jamaica, Queens. Testimony: discriminatory zoning and student assignment policies.

ELLEN FINE: Special education parent. Testimony: the need for vocational training and placement for special needs children.

DR. ALAN GARTNER: Professor, Graduate Center, CUNY; former Director, Divisio of Special Education, NYC Board of Education. Testimony: rights and needs of special education students.

BONNIE JENEVICH: Member, Community Committee on Children Out of School, Brooklyn. Testimony: report on parent school improvement design for John Jay High School.

SANDRA JOHNSON: Board Member, Project PEACE; parent and PTA member, PS 3 NYC. Testimony: parent orgainizing for children's educational rights.

HECTOR MOREA: Director, La Nueva Raza Institute, Queens. Testimony: peer support approaches in alternative eduction.

JULIA PALMER: Director, American Reading Council. Testimony: literacy issues and underfunding of the New York City school library system.

JANET PRICE: Senior Attorney, Advocates for Children. Testimony: school discipline and recommendations for school improvement.

EVA REED, RN: School nurse, Newark, New Jersey. Testimony: pre-high school family living curricula.

ALICIA RODRIGUEZ: Member, the DOME Project, NYC. Testimony: improving school counselling services.

SANDRA PRIEST ROSE: Reading consultant, Reading Reform Foundation. Testimony: effective reading methods.

BARBARA WATERMAN: President, P.S. 238 PTA, Brooklyn. Testimony: early intervention to prevent school failure.

I. CONDITIONS OF SCHOOL CRISIS

Most Americans view education as a means of escaping social and economic deprivation--the pathway to the American dream. Yet what is not so clearly understood is that schools reflect and reproduce the social conditions they operate within far more often than they transcend them. Schools in New York City and State are no exception. A declining and shifting economic base, the rising incidence of social need among students, the cutbacks in education funding have compounded the demands placed on schools, while greatly eroding their resources. These trends have devastating impacts on the majority of school children in urban areas:

> "Who are the public school children of New York City? By any definition, they are a diverse and disadvantaged population. As an indication, 95% of the lunches served in New York City public schools are free or reduced price. (Over) 20% of New York City's children live in poverty by federal standards, compared to 13% nationwide. 55% live in female-headed households; English is a foreign language for about 1/3 of the 945,000 students; 73% are members of racial minority groups; and almost 12% have handicapping conditions.
>
> Laura Altschuler
> Eductional Priorities Panel NYC

Massive school failure for children at risk is by no means inevitable. In fact, education remains an essential arena for redressing the inequities imposed on children by social and economic conditions. Nonetheless, inadequate schooling is constantly reinforced by these larger societal factors, making the struggle for school improvement a complex and difficult one.

ECONOMIC POLARIZATION

The economy shapes the conditions of schooling in critical ways, and most directly by determining the welfare of communities students come from and the world of work schools must prepare them to enter. For disadvantaged students, these environments are already hostile. The Rev. David Garcia, a NY Board of Inquiry member, said it plainly: "We have separate and unequal societies in New York City." Testimony at the hearing explained how today's economy is accelerating this polarization, undermining the promise of opportunity which schools can offer.

> "In minority communities, we assumed that the good jobs and the good life would be there, if only we could assure our children a good education. For many, this belief has been shattered in the past fifteen years by two occurances. One, prolonged economic crisis and stagnation

have destroyed the dream of many, with or without a good education, of ever making it. Two, within that crisis, there has been a structural shift from a manufacturing based economy to a service-based economy...

Middle-level jobs are increasingly being displaced by a large number of low-paying jobs and a smaller number of high-paying jobs. Frequently referred to as the problem of the "vanishing middle," this scenario not only has serious consequences for the existing uneven distribution of earnings, but it undermines the traditional means of mobility from low-wage work to middle level employment...

Any new labor demand generated by hi-tech enterprises does not seem likely to take up the slack of workers displaced by hi-tech, much less provide substantial numbers of new jobs for the underemployed and economically disadvantaged."

Howard Stanback, Economist
New School for Social Research

"In the New York City metropolitan area, national trends can be seen in microcosm. The shift to the service-producing sector of the local economy was at first to retail trade and goverment jobs, but since the mid-70s there has been little or no growth in these sectors. Acceleration in job growth [has been concentrated] particularly in the Manhattan Central Business District--banking and finance, business and personal services, and convention and visitor industries...

The occupational composition of these industries looks like a bottom-heavy hourglass...with a vast number of workers in entry-level jobs who will be competing to move up the career ladder. This imbalance will be exacerbated by shifts in the blue-collar sector, whereby large numbers of skilled, well-paid manufacturing jobs are going to disappear, pushing a whole new group of workers into the white-collar sector, adding to the competition."

Deborah Bell, Assistant Director
Research & Negotiation Department
District Council 37, AFSCME

The blue-collar job exodus, the loss of job mobility, the proliferation of dead-end service jobs, the intensification of job competition--these are conditions which spell growing poverty, hardship and hopelessness for those already at the bottom of the economic ladder. And for youth, the result is an increasingly bleak future, one that offers few rewards and little expectation that schooling can make a difference. A City high school student cited a recent poll taken among her classmates by the

Foundation for Youth Involvement (FYI):

> "Most of the students I go to school with have lousy job prospects... Only 4% of those polled thought it would be very easy to get a job after graduation... Not surprisingly, Native American, Black and Hispanic students were the most skeptical about getting a job after graduation. The highest percentage of those students not planning to go to work after graduation were White and college-bound."
>
> Monique Toran, FYI Member
> Student, Lehman HS, Bronx

These feelings are confirmed by current unemployment figures. Dr. Luis Reyes of ASPIRA reported that the jobless rate for City youth who are 16-20 years of age rose from 53% in 1970 to 73% in 1980. This compares with a national jobless rate in this age group of 21% for white teenagers and 49% for all black teenagers, indicating both the disproportionate impact on minorities and on inner-city communities.

The discriminatory impacts of economic polarization fall heavily on the prospects of young women entering the labor force as well:

> "Although nine out of ten girls can expect to work outside the home at some point in their lives, the vast majority of women workers remain clustered in 20 out of 420 occupations...The fields in which women predominate consistently offer lower salaries than those occupations employing men. The cumulative effects of occupational segregation have led, over the past thirty years, to an increase in the earnings gap between men and women. Today, a white woman earns on the average only 62 cents for every dollar earned by a white man; black women earn only 54 cents and Hispanic women only 49 cents for every dollar earned by a white man."
>
> Rhoda Schulzinger, Director,
> Full Access and Rights to
> Education Coalition (FARE)

Moreover, the incidence of poverty has risen in direct proportion to the increase in marginal jobs and unemployment. NYC Schools Chancellor Nathan Quinones reported that in 1980, 28% of New York City school children were public assistance recipients, a figure which is likely to be much higher today after a 47% increase of families in poverty nationally, over the past three years. Veola Hawkes, an educator and chair of the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Board, testified to parallel conditions upstate: the number of Rochester families at or below the poverty line rose from 8.9% in 1970 to 14.5% in 1980. The bulk of pov-

erty is among minorities, who make up 64% of the school population, although minorities total 30.5% of the city's total population. In suburban Long Island, "poverty pockets" persist. Adele Shapiro of the Long Island Advocacy Center reported that by 1980, there were 140,000 residents and 30,000 families below the official poverty line, not coincidentally served by school districts with the highest drop-out and "push-out" problems.

The promise of education to counter these trends is becoming more and more hollow. On the one hand, students are well aware that to have any chance at all they must reach high levels of school achievement, levels which are not readily attained in distressed schools.

> "Most of my friends have not even passed 9th year math let alone the Trigonometry and calculus a student needs to go on to a good college. I know myself that based on the classes I was given, I could not do well in a normal college.
>
> Monique Toran, FYI

The market value of education is polarizing along with the labor market. In the mid-1980s, school attainment means more in terms of surviving intense job competition and getting a foothold on the occupational ladder. Yet, school attainment paradoxically means less because the competitive market offers fewer chances of reward and more students find that educational achievement is not matched by economic opportunities. The situation places a new burden on schools, which have traditionally relied on the promise of unlimited job mobility to motivate students.

RISING SOCIAL NEEDS

Shrinking and polarized job opportunities, catastrophic youth unemployment, sharp rises in poverty, the overwhelming disparities in jobs and incomes faced by minorities and young women--the economic record adds up to new levels of hardship and distress in every area of social need. Yet, for the disadvantaged, these needs go persistently unanswered. Social services have long been inadequate to the demands of chronic poverty and today, like education, face rising demands with fewer resources. The result is that schools face more and more students who lack the material and developmental supports that contribute to school success.

> "Cuts in educations do not tell the whole story. Reductions in child health and nutrition programs, in employment training, mental health and income support will all affect the ability of children to learn in school. Furthermore, they will disproportionately affect the child-

ren in New York City, where 30% receive AFDC (compared to 12% nationwide)..."

Laura Altschuler, EPP

"Whose fault is it if a child of 7 has missed 80 days of school? Is it the school's failure? Is it the parent's failure? Who or what is stopping that child from attending school?... The most common factor in our cases is that truancy often masks numerous familial problems, and that family needs help and is usually too poor to pay for it. The family may need medical help; the parent may be physically disabled and unable to properly supervise the child; the family may need homemaking services. Many of our parents are single mothers who are struggling alone to raise their children. They may need the help of an outreach worker knocking on the door.

We find that many of our parents fight a war against poverty day after day, year after year; poverty creeping closer into their lives, reducing the amount of food their dollar buys, trashing their living situation, tattering their clothes. They fight a war against poverty that is unrelenting--no weekends off, no vacations, no truce for Christmas. It's not hard to understand why even loving parents can't find the energy to make their children go to school. Some parents are substance abusers, unable to care for themselves, much less their children. The saddest fact of all is that no matter what the reason is, their children are suffering and without an education, will probably suffer for the rest of their lives."

Geoffrey Canada
Education Director,
Rheedlan Foundation

The costs of social neglect are high. In purely monetary terms, Geoffrey Canada cited figures from the Truancy Report, issued by the Economic Development Council of NYC in 1977, which showed that for each child absent, the City lost $4 a day for a total of $164 million annually; 63% of minor youth crimes were committed during school hours--costs for all youth crime and related enforcement totalled $[illegible]1 million that year.

Dollars cannot measure, of course, the toll on childen themselves. A recurring problem cited by NYC principals is the resurgence of youth gang membership, stemming from a search for security in a hostile society:

"We have the Flying Dragons and the Ghost Shadows gangs.. ... Our children have problems of acculturation and identity crisis, and that's what feeds their need to identify

with some group or gang that can give them the feeling of power, or authority, or just being somebody. Our students who immigrate to this country are torn because they are in a 'foreign land,' they do not speak the 'accepted language,' they do not dress 'to be cool.' And they want to so badly because they want to be accepted, they want to mix... We try to provide that identity for them, but we fall very short because we do not have the resources, the staffing, the supplies and the tools that would give us the ability to be innovative and flexible enough to meet the identity crises and needs of our students."

Dr. Archer Dong, Principal
Sun Yat Sen Intermediate School

A climate of insecurity and desperation in the community contributes to the violence and disorder surrounding the schools. When asked why students carry weapons in the high schools, a Brooklyn student Josie Gregoire testified: "Kids are scared. They carry weapons, like knives, to protect themselves. The subways are dangerous, it's dangerous walking home at night if you stay late at school..." These conditions also contribute to violence against the school:

"The area from which we draw our entirely minority student body is characterized by high crime and abandoned buildings. This impacts on the school in some very overt ways. Our library was totally destroyed by arson in December, 13 staff cars were stolen from September to May of this year, and students are frequently accosted and robbed in and near the school...When our library was burned to ashes, our school neighborhood worker told us that people in the housing projects overlooking the school could see the fire, but did not report it because they didn't care about the school."

Mike Cooney, English Teacher
James Monroe High School, Bronx

Deteriorating communities and contracting human services are joined by another major social dislocation which received wide attention at the Hearing: the changing family structure and the conditions of childraising. The pressures on both parents to work and the dramatic rise in single parent households have not been met with new support systems for nurturing and supervising children. Chancellor Quinones cited 1980 Census figures for New York City which showed that one-third of all children were in single parent families, up 25% in ten years. In addition, 55% of all mothers of children 6-17 years old are working. At the same time, according to Laura Altschuler, "there is room in publically-funded day care facilities for only 40% of those eligible." Many witnesses linked the breakdown of traditional parenting and the scarcity of quality child care to pervasive behavioral and

learning difficulties among today's students:

> "We live in a society vastly different from our society of even 30 years ago... today, large numbers of children across all economic and racial lines suffer from "underparenting." Underparenting is a condition where children receive too little quality time and attention from their parents. It is prevalent in homes where parents and children are over-scheduled, in single parent homes, homes with two employed persons, in homes where families live under rather constant stress, and in homes where television is a constant companion."
>
> Judy Thomas, Resolutions Chair
> New York State PTA

> "...more children [illegible] being cared for by surrogate parents during their [illegible]y early years. Situations which amount to no more than custodial care do not provide the children with the enrichment activities and the language development crucial during the formative years. Although students enter the school system at the appropriate age, they must have acquired the linguistic, conceptual and cognitive skills necessary for beginning reading and computation. If they have not done so, student progress is delayed.
>
> Dr. Peter Negroni, Superintendent
> NYC District 12, Bronx

Although the problems of working parents and inadequate child care affect a wide range of American families--and "latchkey kids" are found from the inner-cities to suburbia--the burden falls most heavily on the female single parent, the poorest segment of our population. That stress is greatly compounded when single parents are teenagers. Dr. Rich reported that at Andrew Jackson High School, "about 200 of our students are currently pregnant and an additional 200 are parents," representing roughly 10% of the school's enrollment.

> "The incidence of teenage pregnancy appears to be related directly to the increase of female-headed single parent families. Half of all AFDC expenditures go to households in which women bore their first child as teenagers. A female in the US has a 40% chance of experiencing pregnancy during adolescence and that risk is 11.5% higher for girls in New York City."
>
> Rhoda Schulzinger, FARE

Clearly, today's public schools, and particularly urban schools, are confronted with a pressing demand to play a new role in our society, to meet the multiple needs that youth bring into

into the classroom beyond the need for academic training. Not one of the educators, advocates, parents or students who spoke at the Hearing felt we could turn back to the days of "the 3 R's" in responding to this demand. And not one felt that the societal pressures devolving on the schools made quality education a hopeless task. What each did express, however, was alarm and at times despair that schools are so regularly denied the funding and staffing resources which allow effective learning and healthy personal development to take place.

II. UNDERFUNDING EDUCATION

"I can remember a time when, for children coming out of crowded and run-down city slums, school was an oasis of cleanliness and order, where the physical surroundings, the well-stocked library shelves, the textbook of ones own, were signs that education was something special. Today, in New York City, the majority of our schools are in such a deplorable state of disrepair that it makes a mockery of the value our society is supposed to put on education. This attitude is conveyed not only to students, but to the teachers, who, as many studies have pointed out, are already laboring under a public perception that their calling lacks dignity and status. When I, as a parent, stand in an inner-city classroom in an 80-year-old building with the paint peeling off the walls, and see students sharing textbooks that they are not allowed to bring home, I sometimes think that merely achieving that much-maligned level of "mediocrity" cited with such contempt by the national commission would be a step forward for some of New York City's schools."

Laura Altschuler, EPP

FISCAL INEQUITY

The underfunding of public education, especially in the inner-cities, is an old story. But in the mid-1970s, after a decade of some improvement in both funding and access to schooling, the bottom dropped out for New York City students. The 1975 fiscal crisis meant, as Laura Altschuler summarized, "municipal services were drastically slashed to balance the budget and public school children were asked to pay more than their fair share of the burden."

The school services lost in 1975 were never fully restored -and for a generation of children, they can never be restored. Yet now, shrinking local support for public schools is compounded on a national scale by major reductions in federal assistance to education under the Reagan Administration. Judy Thomas, of the State PTA, commented, "the Administration has urged cuts to the federal education budget of $9.6 billion since coming into power. Actual real dollars have declined 21.5% from Fiscal '80 to Fiscal '84."

"According to figures released last month [April '84] by the National Education Association, federal aid as a proportion of total school spending has fallen to its lowest level since the 1960's, to 6.4% from a 1980 high of 9.2%. ...Federal funds have fallen from approximately 15% of the NYC Board of Education's budget to about 10% between 1981 and 1985...

> During a time of unprecedented inflation, federal education aid to New York City fell from $371 million in the 1980-81 school year to $293 in the 1982-83 school year. Most of that loss was felt in Title I aid, which is specifically targeted to low-income students who need remedial instruction. In addition, the elimination of impact aid, [based on] New York City's many federal housing projects...caused the loss of $23 million. Bilingual aid, too, has fallen, despite the fact that New York City is still the nation's primary recipient of immigrants. Our public schools serve more than 50 different language groups, and we provide bilingual or ESL instruction for 13 of them."
>
> Finally, Chapter 2, which represents dozens of categorical programs now consolidated into a single block grant, has also shrunk by about 15%, although the anticipated administrative savings from consolidation never really materialized. The effect of this cut on disadvantaged children was exacerbated by changes in regulations that allowed the funds to be distributed citywide, including private schools and more affluent districts, rather than being targeted to the neediest areas."
>
> Laura Altschuler, EPP

The diversion of federal aid into private schooling is generally associated with the Reagan plan for tuition tax credits. But testimony made clear that, regardless of tuition tax credits, the shift is well underway:

> "PTA is alarmed by the increasing trend to place more public dollars, federal and state, in the coffers of private schools. In New York State in 1981-82, more than $214 million education dollars were diverted from public to non-public schools. This figure is constantly rising. $214 million would provide a great deal of aid to low-wealth school districts..."
>
> Judy Thomas, NYS PTA

A number of witnesses at the Hearing cited the problems of fiscal support from New York State, which according to Altschuler, pays for less than 40% of public school costs. NYC Chancellor Quinones, among others, focused on inequities in the state funding formula which grants the City only 30% of total state aid, although it enrolls 34% of the State's public school students.

> "As a result, per pupil spending in New York City, despite our concentration of high-cost students, is far lower than the downstate average and surrounding suburban districts. The low level of aid is mainly a function of

> the complex way the state formula measures district wealth and the fact that it counts only students who attend school regularly, not the total enrolled. With an average attendance rate of about 85%--which can be attributed to family and economic conditions as well as the failure of our schools--New York City is thus deprived of millions of dollars in state support...
>
> Laura Altshuler, EPP

One response to understanding why the pattern of fiscal inequity is so persistent at all levels of school funding was offered by a frontline administrator:

> "The education of disadvantaged/minority children is a commodity which has negligible impact on the lives of those in power who have the authority to make budgetary decisions--to give and to take away. The impact is negligible because these decision makers do not have a vested interest in disadvantaged/minority areas--much less in the inhabitants--and so much less in their children. The children of the fiscal decision makers do not attend public schools or have already completed their education. Therefore, the fact that schools have been an early and frequent target for drastic budget cuts not only demonstrates their shortsightedness, but their failure to respond to an economically disenfranchised community.
>
> Dr. Peter Negroni, Superintendent

DETERIORATING SCHOOLS AND SERVICES

The symptoms of inadequate and unequal funding are highly visible in the crumbling facilities which provide the school environment for thousands of urban students:

> "Here we have not had a fully reliable bell system since December 1982. This has had a disastrous effect on a system coordinated by bells. This alone has created a great deal of disruption and wandering in the halls. The student restrooms, when working at all, did not have functioning sinks over several years. Staff restrooms have not had soap in over a year, despite complaints and shouting matches. Shades are impossible to obtain. Paint is peeling. A Board demand for a closed cafeteria led to chaos and food-fights because it was not accompanied by delivery of sufficient chairs to seat the crowds. This particular problem was relieved when students began to break past guards and make their way down to McDonalds or home for lunch."
>
> Mike Cooney, Teacher

The fiscal squeeze has seriously eroded the most critical ingredient of schooling, quality staff. Chancellor Quinones attributed New York City's teacher shortage, high turnover and under-qualified personnel to the low base pay and inability to offer competitive salaries. A number of educators at the Hearing cited staffing problems as the major obstacle to meeting student needs. A corollary problem is unmanageable class size. Student-teacher ratios now average 34-1 in elementary schools, and in some instances well exceed that level. In the high schools, teachers are often responsible for 170 students per day, with counselling ratios often exceeding 600-1.

Cutbacks have also meant that crucial supportive services and improvement programs cannot be offered:

> "Schools are forced to eliminate vital support systems such as guidance counselors, and enrichment activities such as art and music. Books and materials are so costly that principals will often have to hold back on curriculum innovations, the replenishing of old or lost texts, or perhaps they buy for only one curricular area at a time. The children most affected are the children of the poor, who cannot afford to pay for these support services and enrichment activities when their schools cannot afford to provide them...
>
> I am currently striving to establish a computer center in each school in my district. By the time it becomes financially feasible to equip each one of the schools, initial efforts will have become outdated, outmoded, obsolete--I'll be back at step one. Financial, budgetary constraints will prohibit me from getting my student population those things which I know are crucial to their education and which I know will be available to others by reason of their birth and/or ethnic origin."
>
> Dr. Peter Negroni, Superintendent

The current state of the school library system in New York City is a stark and disturbing reminder of why there is a literacy crisis in the schools:

> "Mayor Koch's budget for 1985...provides no money for elementary school libraries. This is nothing new... In 1975, with the cuts required by New York's fiscal crisis, elementary school librarians were transferred to classrooms, and the libraries were locked or their contents dispersed and lost. The library budget was eliminated. Almost overnight a flourishing library system was thrown away...
>
> A hundred city school librarians were recently asked about the state of the school library system. These are some replies:

From a junior high school in Queens: 'No money whatsoever for supplies absolutely essential for minimal functioning of a library. I am considering paying for some myself.' From a high school in Queens: 'Dropped New York Times Index, New York Times on microfilm, magazines down from 200 titles to 70. Cannot discard obsolete material (would fall below State Education Department mandates for accreditation).' From a vocational high school in the Bronx: 'Dropped audio-visual software, computer software, encyclopedias, all microfilm, many magazines. I personally pay for any software I buy. I can't even afford technical books for the shops.'"

Julia Palmer, Director
American Reading Council

A pointed summary of how deprived school conditions are placing our children at risk was offered by Dr. Negroni:

"Students who are excluded from participating in special programs due to budgetary constraints, or who are locked into remediation programs due to the lack of available resources, have been denied equal access, have been denied equal opportunity--and will forever be denied the world of excellence. How can we speak of additional requirements, stronger mandates, minimum achievement competency testing, without speaking of ways of assuring that children can achieve these mandates? We are irresponsible when we call for more on the part of the student and provide nothing to assist him or her. Our call for minimum standards will surely increase the number of drop-outs, if we fail to do something about the reasons students are behind."

III. PROBLEMS AND DILEMMAS OF AN UNEQUAL SYSTEM

The economic, social and fiscal conditions facing New York school systems set a context for the conduct of education within the local school, a context of deprivation and inequity for most low-come minority and female students and those with special needs. Yet, the testimony of the Hearing made it abundantly clear that school systems themselves make choices about addressing these conditions, which can either ameliorate or compound educational disadvantage. The Hearing gave evidence of the many deficiencies in school structures and services that damage both children and the learning environment. Testimony also suggested multiple approaches to school improvement, which we will take up in Section IV. Before examining the remedies, however, we should be fully aware of the breadth of the problems and the need for systematic change in nearly every dimension of current practice.

THE SCHOOL FACTORY

Over many decades, school administrations have been centralized and specialized for greater efficiency, schools and districts have been consolidated according to the notion of "economies of scale." The rationale was that more students under one roof would not only reduce operating costs, but also increase the potential for providing differentiated curriculum and special services.

But economies of scale may well be dysfunctional to education, especially in severely underfunded urban systems. Despite efforts to reduce class size in New York City, classes contain up to 40 students in many elementary and secondary schools, coupled with large total enrollments to be scheduled and processed through the school program. At the same time, there are severe restrictions on the supportive services, equipment, supplies and staff resources available to students. Here, the principle of efficiency becomes in reality the basis for anonymity, neglect, and what one high school teacher called, "a frightening fragmentation of experience for students as well as staff."

> "No parent coming into the school can hope to obtain a total picture of the child from any one staff person. The student rushes from class to class, piling up the credits needed for graduation (even though most never achieve this goal). There is neither time nor funding in the budget to allow for any planning or interdisciplinary work, or even sufficient guidance counselors to make sense of the racing around. Frequently a student may be in the wrong class for a term and never know it. Teachers find it equally difficult in 40 minutes to develop a complete picture of each student...Masses of adol-

escents rush in and out, and it is hardly surprising that many find the experience so cold, impersonal and disheartening that they decide to stay home by the sad warmth of the TV set with its soap operas and cartoons."

Mike Cooney, Teacher

Concern about the fragmentation of curriculum and services, and the resulting impersonality of school experience, is not limited to high schools. The problem is manifest as well in the growing failure to engage elementary school truants:

"A child identified as a chronic truant, or potentially a chronic truant, might be reported by the teacher--or he might not. Someone from the school attendance office might try to contact the parent, and might be successful or might not. The child might attend school again, probably not. A child with a history of truancy won't just re-enter the schools without experiencing any problems--that much we're sure about... The more days of school one misses, the harder it is to go back and keep going back. If a child comes to the attention of Special Services for Children because that child has been reported as a truant, the social worker must decide what issue is more pressing--this truancy case or a child abuse and neglect case. Understandably, the social worker whose caseload is already unmanageable finds it hard to provide the constant monitoring and case work necessary to get the chronic truant back into school and keep him there."

Geoffrey Canada
Rheedlan Foundation

INADEQUATE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

Throughout the Hearing, the pressure of numbers and the inadequacy of services, especially guidance services, were raised as critical problems. Students particularly cited the lack of counseling as a barrier to access and to quality in their program placements, discouraging a sense of direction and purpose in school.

"In junior high school, my guidance counselor rarely had time for career counseling, so I found myself drifting until I'd made my decision to attend school to study journalism... My enthusiasm for writing kept me going until about the first term of my junior year, when I realized that I wanted to transfer into the printing program... I filed the appropriate forms so I would be enrolled in the printing program. In February, I found that I had been placed right back into my newspaper journalism class. I waited until change forms were available and filled them out. I waited but got no response... I

> I look back on my high school days and I can truly say that I was cheated. I had no career counseling, wound up studying something I already knew how to do, and left school with few marketable skills."
>
> Janice Jenkins, Youth Advocate
> YES Change

A former high school drop-out confirmed the problem, which is more acute for high risk students:

> "...I never knew who my counselor was and he wasn't available for me. In the year I attended John Jay, I saw him once about working papers--one ten-minute interview, period."
>
> Lisa Ferguson, Brooklyn student

LOW EXPECTATIONS

As underfunding magnifies problems, while reducing services, school morale often sags so badly that teachers, students and parents alike conclude that nobody cares, that failure is inevitable. The problem of low expectations for disadvantaged school communities has been attributed primarily to educators, both teachers and administrators, since they are its most visible agents. But the testimony also revealed that the problem is systemic, a product of discriminatory social attitudes and institutional inequity. One parent illustrated the decline of his child's elementary school:

> "P.S. 86 used to be an all-white, middle-class school; it used to be the uptown campus school for what was then Hunter College, and was one of the best schools in the City. As the student body became predominantly Latino, and to a lesser extent Black, the school system simply stopped taking any interest whatsover in the school... We had about 27% of the kids reading at grade level, most of the toilets and washrooms didn't work, the bathrooms right next to the lunchroom had overflowing toilets, and according to the principal, the sinks hadn't worked in months... A big issue in the school was that a lot of the teachers would hit the kids and nothing would be done about it. Equally, many times kids would hit teachers and, just to be fair, nothing was ever done about this either. We felt that this absurdity showed the total lack of any level of respect or expectations on the part of the administration for either students or teachers."
>
> Jon Moscow, Project PEACE

An administrator confirmed the ways that low-income, minority students are typecast for failure by society, and ulti-

mately, in their own self-image:

> "Jackson's student body is Black and poor and generally perceived to be unteachable... thus our most serious problem is the pervasive perception of Jackson as a bad school, as a dangerous school, as a school where little, if any, teaching and learning takes place. Of course, we share this perception with many other Black schools. Equally serious is the students' perception of themselves as failures--as incapable of learning to read, to write, to count--so devoid of basic skills which make for success in the outside world that they are rendered powerless. These students have been indoctrinated with this view since entering elementary school... where little was expected of them and where little was received."
>
> Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich, Principal

While the Hearing brought out many of the conditions which deflate teacher morale, as well as student aspirations, an important element of low expectations is staffing patterns which promote bias and insensitivity:

> "I have experienced the widespread attitude of an appreciable number of teachers that failure is taken for granted in the urban schools. Our schools are staffed predominantly with suburban teachers who generally exhibit no vested interest in the problems of the city where they work. Our staff is 75% white, while our student population is 64% non-white.
>
> It appears to me that the majority of the teachers lack the critical sensitivity and caring skills that are desperately needed to work with young children who come into the school system lacking educational nurturing and with other individual needs."
>
> Veola Hawkes, Chair
> Rochester Youth Board

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL SCHOOLS: CREAMING THE ADVANTAGED

The existence of separate and unequal societies within the urban centers produces separate and unequal school systems, as Rev. David Garcia pointed out at the start of the Hearing. The two-tiered nature of education is most plainly visible in the growing network of private and parochial schools which attract the most advantaged students. But "creaming," or selecting out those students who appear to be the best, also occurs within the public system. A principal describes the impact of stratification among schools:

> "Our top students are lured away from our locally zoned junior high schools and taken uptown to the other junior highs in my district, because they're perceived as better schools. We have the SP programs just as they do; however, it's seen as a privilege to go uptown. The result is that my school will become the bilingual/ESL (English as a Second Language) school in the district. Therefore, my students will not get the opportunity to rub elbows with a cross-section of different types of students. We will not be a heterogeneously grouped school in a couple of years; we will become a homogeneous Limited English Proficiency school. That scares me. We need to protect the neighborhood school."
>
> Dr. Archer Dong, Principal

Competition for students occurs throughout the New York City system, among elementary and junior high schools, within and between districts. But this creaming process is particularly damaging at the high school level. High school selection is a complex process--students choose schools and schools choose students. Yet, as the NYC Schools Chancellor testified:

> "We cannot have a public school system providing for what might be a private education, [in terms of] the skimming effects that magnet programs and magnet schools sometimes create... I'm all for student options, but I also want to insure that the students admitted are reflective of the overall population of the city system. Otherwise, we will have segregation of students beyond ethnic and racial segregation; we'll have segregation that relegates some of our students to cast-off status."
>
> Chancellor Nathan Quinones

Ironically, some of the mechanisms within New York's system of student selection were initially promoted to reduce segregation. The impact has been the opposite, jeopardizing the viability of comprehensive neighborhood high schools.

> "The Choice of Admissions Program (COA) was created by the New York City Board of Education...to reduce racial imbalance in Queens high schools. It has had the effect of making Jackson a racially segregated high school. Under COA, Black students who live in the far-flung COA zone have the option of applying to any high school which is more than 50% white. Many white students choose parochial schools. For many years, none have chosen Jackson. Guidance staff and supervisors in the intermediate and junior high schools which feed Jackson encourage the most motivated Black students to select other Queens high schools or education option high schools as their first choice. Simultaneously, the most "difficult" and "chal-

lenging" Black students are encouraged to select Jackson as their first choice.

The plan has the effect of placing a disproportionate number of non-achieving and underachieving students at Jackson... Further, as the Choice of Admissions Program currently operates (and its operation mirrors that of education options programs across the City), students who do not meet acceptable educational and behavioral standards in their receiving schools are returned to their neighborhood schools."

Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich, Principal

There are more than 50 neighborhood zoned high schools in the New York City system; most of them face serious problems created by the creaming mechanisms built into citywide high school selection. Community leaders put it this way:

"I live in the area of Andrew Jackson High School. But I know that the problems Andrew Jackson faces are not any different than ones that schools face in other parts of the City. The gerrymandered zoning and the high school selection processes are unbelievable. They create a citywide skimming policy that we compare to orange juice--our Black youngsters are being treated like the sediment that collects at the bottom of orange juice containers. We're not shaking the juice right."

Mattie Evans, Chair,
Phi Delta Kappa Big Sisters
Educational Access Center

"Hispanic students have fewer choices, have decisions made for them by administrators, and are more likely to end up in zoned high schools. English language requirements, in particular, keep our youth out of vocational training for lucrative technical trades."

Dr. Luis Reyes, ASPIRA

TESTING AND TRACKING

Any selection process punishes those it does not reward. The pervasive practice of tracking students, based primarily on test scores, also promotes rigid and inappropriate hierarchies in the quality of school services and the learning opportunities available to children.

"There's too often, on every level--elementary, middle and high school--the assigment of students to classes on the most arbitrary of decisions, on the principle that we must provide for homogeneous grouping... The latest re-

search, as provided by Goodlad, clearly indicates that heterogeneous grouping is as beneficial for students in the advanced levels of achievement as it is for poorer students. I would differentiate those students in the most extreme ranges of student achievement--the most retarded as well as the most advanced. But I would say that the major bulk of students should be integrated without fear that this would diminish the educational progress of those on or above grade level."

Chancellor Nathan Quinones

Yet, most students are separated and segregated according to notions of ability, increasingly translated as the results of standardized testing. "Never have so many relied so much on an instrument that is so little understood," testified Deborah Meier, Director of Central Park East School in East Harlem. Meier presented the major concerns that a growing movement of parents and educators share about the misuses of testing:

1) Standardized multiple-choice, norm-referenced testing, the sort we are all familiar with, does <u>not</u> measure what it purports to measure. Reading tests don't test reading, but test-taking skills.

2) The way that scores are reported to parents, teachers and the public is misleading, if not outright dishonest.

3) Current testing practices misdirect both our teaching methods and the curriculum of our schools, which are becoming increasing test-driven rather than learner-centered.

4) Testing practices lead us to mislabel large numbers of children, with serious implications for their present education and future options; testing also effects the way we view all children.

"Despite the lip service we pay to the myriad ways in which individuals differ, and claim to celebrate this variety, our practices speak otherwise. In fact, it is performance on these tests--with their narrow and rigid definition both of when children should be able to perform particular skills and how they should be able to exhibit their knowledge--that determines whether we see children as "okay" or not. In the process, we damage all children--we devalue the variety they bring with them to school... A testing program whose primary function is to create a rank-order--comparing all children on the basis of narrow and largely hidden criteria--creates to no one's surprise a <u>particular</u> rank order: one that corresponds to the social class background of the children's families."

Deborah Meier, School Director

Many other witnesses corroborated this view of testing as verification of social class rather than as any useful measure of children's skills, talents, achievement or capacity.

> "We should not be seduced by the ostensible accuracy of tests. They continue to provide information, but no test has a correlation of complete reliability in terms of predicting or reflecting student ability and student progress... We can't let tests be a unitary standard by which we classify and place students."
>
> Chancellor Nathan Quinones

The impact of test-driven tracking and classification mechanisms falls especially hard on minority students:

> "Tests which are purportedly designed to maintain educational standards largely serve to keep Hispanic students our of programs they want and need to stay in school and to progress academically. Such barriers close off access to vocational and cooperative education programs in a discriminatory fashion, increase anxiety and discontent, foster negative self-concepts, and slowly push students out of school."
>
> Dr. Luis Reyes, ASPIRA

VOCATIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Testing is not the only barrier in standard public high school practice. Testimony at the hearing documented pervasive sex discrimination in the vocational programs available to female students. Such discrimination not only involves the assignment of girls to "traditional" occupational tracks and their exclusion from non-traditional programs, but also involves the linkages of school to work.

> "Printing students (mostly male) had access to good, productive after-school job opportunities, while the journalist students (female) were subjected to filing and errand-person duties, unless they were doing an internship with a newspaper or magazine, which was rare."
>
> Janice Jenkins, YES Change

A study of sex discrimination in New York City vocational programs, conducted by the Full Access and Rights to Education Coalition (FARE), came to these conclusions:

> "Of the City's 21 job training high schools, 12 have enrollments that are predominantly male and 5 are predominantly female. Students at the primarily male schools study electronics and computer servicing, while the pre-

dominantly female schools offer cosmetology, health assistance and clerical programs.

Even in the few vocational schools with a more even balance between males and females, boys are overwhelmingly found in the high technology programs while girls prepare to be stenographers and dental aides.

In our extensive analysis of this vocational education system, the FARE Coalition found that inequitable policies and practices of the schools are largely responsible for such extreme segregation. For example, guidance counselors continue to tell female students that certain courses are "for boys only." Sex-biased admissions tests often preclude female enrollment in high technology programs, and sex-stereotyped recruitment and training materials discourage applications from girls."

Rhoda Schulzinger, FARE

COMPROMISING BILINGUAL EDUCATION

One of the legacies of the civil rights movement is the range of categorical programs created by Congress for students whose needs require more than the mainstream services that most urban systems can provide. Yet, federal funding has lagged far behind Congressional mandates and the current Administration has severely reduced already inadequate appropriations. This federal fiscal squeeze helps to compromise the effectiveness of the categorical programs, and has virtually gutted the entitlement to bilingual education services.

One product of underfunding is the scarcity of qualified teachers to conduct bilingual programs:

"I cannot staff my bilingual programs with appropriately licensed personnel. Qualified personnel with licenses prefer to teach at high schools. At this point, my junior high school bilingual program is staffed with non-licensed bilingual teachers because I just can't get enough licensed teachers."

Dr. Archer Dong, Principal

The work of Dr. Isaura Santiago Santiago of Columbia's Teacher College was cited at the Hearing in documenting the inadequacy of the City's bilingual programs:

"The Board of Education's January 1984 Profile of LEP Students documents that there are approximately 7,400 Hispanic students who lack literacy skills in English and Spanish, and yet half of them are unentitled to bilingual services. Latecomers to the school system, especially in

high school, who are LEP students, often receive services emphasizing intensive English instruction, get lost in the rest of their courses, and become prime drop-out candidates. Nor are all eligible students receiving bilingual services--up to 15,000 eligible students are not enrolled in mandated programs."

Dr. Luis Reyes, ASPIRA

Many witnesses pointed out that national, as well as state and local, policy on bilingual education is increasingly contradictory, given the current reform emphasis on foreign language ability as a requirement of high school graduation and college entrance:

"Policy-makers have not addressed the unique citizenship status of Puerto Ricans, which points to the need for maintenance of our youths' native language skills. Findings on the relationship between the maintenance of Spanish and positive educational attainment have not been accepted as the basis for policy. At a time when national needs underscore the need for better foreign language competence, policy-makers prefer to strip the Puerto Rican of his language and then invest in offering whites the opportunity to learn Spanish."

Dr. Isaura Santiago Santiago
Teachers College

UNDERSERVING SPECIAL NEEDS

The mandate to provide special education services for children with handicapping conditions was a major victory for universal public schooling in the last decade, but it is a victory severely eroded by underfunding, linked to inadequate and inappropriate implementation practices.

"The only (federal) aid category that has grown is aid to children with handicapping conditions--from $12 million to $15 million. But this is a cruel hoax, compared to the level of aid originally authorized under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This law, while mandating a much needed range of services for these children, anticipated and authorized a federal funding role of 40% of costs. Ten years later, appropriations have never covered more than 8% of costs in New York City, while we are serving about three times as many of the underserved children as we did in 1975. In fact, many experts are attributing the growing number of referrals to special education to the fact that the regular education system is starved for the kinds of support services, small classes and alternative programs that the special education system is mandated to provide."

Laura Altschuler, EPP

The results of inadequate funding levels and narrow categorical interpretations of the funding mandate are paradoxical. The goal is to maximize educational opportunity for the handicapped, particularly by increasing their access to the mainstream system. Yet, the mainstream is itself deficient for a very broad range of student needs and instead, throws its problems back onto a segregated special education sub-system. Special education has become too often a "dumping ground" for children who are underserved in the regular system, while children with distinct disabilities still do not get the supportive services required for an effective education within the "mainstream," and children with severe disabilities do not receive the special programs and services appropriate to their needs.

The failure to provide effective access to the mainstream was a major issue of concern at the Hearing. Witnesses cited a formidable set of barriers, including physical design, placement practices and staffing conditions which undermine the commitment to full educational services in "least restrictive environments."

> "A severe problem continues to be the failure of buildings to be accessible. The only way I can describe this is by giving you an example: in one district there is a 4th grade child who is orthopedically impaired and has some emotional problems. The child uses a wheelchair; however, the school building is not accessible. When the child needs to go up to another floor for library or classes, he must hop up the stairs and drag his wheelchair behind him, tied by a rope around his waist. The other children call him Froggy. School people are wondering why this child has developed some emotional problems."
>
> Kim Hare, Coordinator
> Western NY Protection and
> Advocacy Outreach Office

A physically handicapped student in New York City amplified the problem:

> "Handicapped students are all too often categorized and placed in non-mainstreamed classes right from the start. And whether or not they are bright enough to cope with the mainstreamed classes goes totally unquestioned. Once in the special education classes, the students have to sit in one room for most of the six hours they are in school! Which usually leads to boredom, and with boredom comes daydreaming, and as we all know, if you are daydreaming your chances of learning are limited."
>
> Richard Daniels, Student
> Truman High School NYC

High schools also discriminate against special needs students through selective admission procedures, reinforcing the pattern that handicapped children are the least likely to complete their education:

> "Students with handicapping conditions are least successful in gaining admission to New York City's specialized academic and vocational high schools, not only because these schools rely on outstanding grades and standardized test scores for selecting their student body, but also because these programs do not provide the extensive instructional modifications and support services some handicapping conditions require... When PL 94-142 took effect, fewer than 22% of handicapped students of high school age remained in school. Now, record numbers of students are being served, but fewer than 10% of all students assigned to special education programs complete their schooling and graduate from school."
>
> Paula Hepner, PEA

For severely handicapped children, the inadequacy and isolation of special programs is even more acute:

> "Many, if not most, autistic children are educated in segregated environments with little or no mainstreaming or contact with non-handicapped peers. Both federal and state education laws are based on the concept of least-restrictive environment and normalization, yet many autistic children spend their entire lives in educational programs which cut them off from any remedial contact with role-modeling, non-handicapped peers."
>
> Margaret Raustiala, NYS Society for Autistic Children

The referral, evaluation and placement processes which remove students from the mainstream for assignment to special education are also riddled, in far too many cases, with the negative labeling, sorting and stereotyping produced by standardized testing. These referral and evaluation processes, like other selective mechanisms in tracked systems, pose serious dangers of arbitrary judgement and discrimination. Minority students have been particular victims.

These troubling patterns of racially imbalanced placements are not limited to Long Island. Analysis of evaluation and placement data from urban systems demonstrates similar trends throughout the country and in New York City:

> "Advocates for Children's recent analysis of the ethnic data on students in special education, collected by the Office of Civil Rights, reveals that there are notable

patterns of over-representation of Blacks and Hispanics in certain types of self-contained classrooms. Classes for the emotionally handicapped, neurologically impaired, learning disabled and educable mentally retarded are disproportionately Black, while classes for the speech, language and hearing impaired are disproportionately Hispanic."

Paula Hepner, PEA

The increasingly numbers of students assigned to special education can further be linked to the increasing reliance on standardized testing to categorize student potential.

"Through testing we damage all children--we devalue the variety of strength they bring with them to school [and] all differences become handicaps. The deviants--particularly those below our magic cut-off points--then become the subjects of fierce debate: who is to blame for their failures and what labels should be affixed to them? Both debates are educational dead-ends. But what does happen is that the population channeled into special education grows annually to its present staggering proportions. If we fix the label of "misfit" upon all children in the bottom 20%, 25% or 30% of our population, then of course we'll get 20%, 25% or 30% of them labeled in need of special education! Why then are we surprised when each year some 5-10% are marched off to special education classes, and the teacher looks askance at the next 5-10% who now fall at the bottom of her newly redefined 'normal' population?"

Deborah Meier, School Director

Another dimension of the crisis in special education is the lack of qualified teachers. A special education teacher trainer testified on current conditions in the field:

"Somewhere between one in four or one in five teachers in New York City are now teaching special education. This demand for new teachers cannot be met in an atmosphere which has dropped the career of teacher from its preferred list of professions, or in a college market which sees fewer students entering pre-service education programs.

...An outcome of this situation, unfortunately, has been to lower qualifications for all teachers, including special education teachers. At present, taking three or four courses in any area of education qualifies a person for a Temporary Per-Diem Certificate. Several thousand certificate holders are now teaching in the system. This minimum course requirement will be dropped altogether in

> the Fall of 1984. In effect, we now have the least experienced, least qualified persons being hired to educate those students who have the most severe learning needs and are often the most difficult to teach."
>
> Howard Gollub
> UFT Teacher Educator
> Special Educator Support Program

OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The Hearing took testimony from parents, advocates and schoolpeople critical of teachers, especially when poor and minority communities were served by educators who neither understood nor valued their experience. Yet much of our testimony focused on the conditions which make it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to work effectively. And many witnesses did not hold teachers primarily responsible for the failure of educational achievement among poor, minority and disadvantaged students. The study conducted by the Foundation for Youth Involvement in New York City high schools, for example, reported that "most of the students we polled felt that their teachers were qualified for their positions (83%) and cared about their students' progress in school (92%)."

Testimony about teachers centered on the disparity between the conditions teachers face and the limits on their rewards and satisfaction. One major obstacle to raising teacher quality is the low starting pay currently offered to teachers entering the most demanding systems:

> "We have to be competitive with other school systems in terms of attracting quality staff, if we're going to try harder in terms of expectations and accountability. That has to be done in terms of a class size population that makes some sense. Currently, we have a high school class size ratio of 34-1, which undermines the efforts we propose regarding the reduction of drop-outs, etc.... If we have in our schools student cast-offs, we also have, unfortunately, teachers who have not been hired by other school systems; [others] don't opt to join our school system because of the lack of competitive salaries. That is not a pitch for the UFT. It's a pitch for students to have quality education with quality prepared teachers."
>
> NYC Chancellor Nathan Quinones

As indicated above, staffing problems have reached crisis proportions in special education:

> "The combination of low starting salaries, poor working conditions, great stress and little support is compounded by a 25% attrition rate for first year special educators-...These novice teachers must be on-the-job learners,

since their preparation has been so limited. In many cases, they have little or no knowledge in crucial areas such as the processes of learning, the educational impact of handicapping conditions, working with parents, student assessment or the organization and management of a classroom. Some have not experienced being in a public school classroom since they graduated from high school."

Howard Gollub, Teacher Educator

The result of this failure to support teachers, both monetarily and professionally, is a corrosive build-up of stress and diminishing returns in job satisfaction:

"I am somewhat biased in assessing the quality of my colleagues, who endure the same blows I do and keep coming back to teach kids. There are incompetents, but in many cases they weed themselves out, because their own ineffective teaching creates more stress on top of the stress everyone else experiences. A much more serious problem is that many of the most experienced and capable teachers, who find it impossible to continue for financial as well as personal reasons, choose to vest their pensions at 15 or 20 years and leave the system. As my friend Walter, who is now ready to send a child to college and is fed up with the low salary and lack of appreciation, says, 'Every year I get a little older, but they're always sixteen and strong as bulls.'

Michael Cooney, Teacher

SHUTTING OUT PARENTS

Parent participation is like the weather: everyone wants it to be good, nobody knows what to do when it's not. Some of the testimony focused on how schools and schoolpeople reduce and frustrate effective parent participation. One parent described her initial attempts at parent involvement:

"I had become a single parent with six children, five of them in the public school system. The times I did go to PTA meetings I had a hard time relating, due to the fact that the board was controlled by middle class parents whose children were neither educationally nor economically disadvantaged. I felt a sense of powerlessness and didn't feel I could make a dent in any school decision. Most of the discussion was foreign to me; everybody seemed so knowledgeable due to their involvement. I felt like there was a big gap between the have and have-nots, and I was part of the have-nots. I would leave the meetings feeling helpless; here I was, coming out to be involved, to better help my children, especially the one who was having a learning problem. Yet I would go home

with the impression that maybe I had the problem. Because of the agony, I soon stopped going."

Leona Gordon, New Rochelle
Parents Advisory Council

The experience of powerlessness is not limited to PTA meetings or to the advisory councils in federally funded compensatory and bilingual programs, which have recently been severely weakened. A parent and advocate for autistic children summed up the obstacles many parents face meeting their childrens' education needs when special services are required:

"Parents want to be actively involved in their child's educational program. But they want to be involved as partners with educators in a process whose goal is to provide the most appropriate services for their child in the least restrictive setting. Unfortunately, they must expend precious energy advocating for basic services, fighting to get appropriate related services, or struggling to convince the educational system that their child can learn."

Margaret Raustiala,
NYS Society for Autistic Children

The frustrating relationship of special education parents with school authorities and staff reflects more general problems that all parents contend with in guiding their children's education. These problems were succinctly summed up by a New York City special educator who trains teachers in developing parent involvement and support:

"The pattern of school experience which parents face is too often stressful, crisis-oriented and anxiety-ridden. For many parents, the bureaucracy of special education begins with their first contact--a letter which is perceived as threatening because of its negative message. From here, parents are thrust into new experiences with clinicians, administrators and groups called COHs and SBSTs.

As one parent put it, 'The helping hand strikes again--there are so many of them.'

Howard Gollub, Teacher Educator

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Maintaining an orderly environment conducive to learning is a formidable challenge in large, impersonal schools with overcrowded classrooms and few supportive services. As Mike Cooney, an English teacher at James Monroe High School, testified, "If

kids didn't drop out, I couldn't teach. Some kids make it impossible to teach."

School districts are often quick to isolate students perceived as disruptive, typically in special education programs, especially those designed for the emotionally handicapped. School personnel themselves point out that if counseling services and a more favorable student/teacher ratio were available in the mainstream, fewer students with behavior problems would be referred.

Schools also rely heavily on suspension to deal with disciplinary infractions. In New York City, for instance, there has been a dramatic rise in the suspension rate in a period of declining enrollment--from 14,351 suspensions citywide in 1969-70 to nearly 40,000 in the 1982-83 school year, according to statistics kept by the Board of Education.

Suspension practices indicate a pattern of discrimination. Veola Hawkes, chair of the Rochester Youth Board, testified that Rochester is "a district which I consider out of control, in which punitive measures such as suspensions are impacting disproportionately on black and handicapped students." A report, On Violent and Disruptive Behavior in Rochester Public Schools, issued by the Rochester Urban League, indicates that "one out of every four Rochester secondary students faced suspension in 1982-83." Black students were "40% more likely to be suspended from the city schools than white students." Special education students "comprised 7% of the school enrollment but over 13% of total suspensions." 1980 figures from the US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, indicate tht statewide, blacks make up 23.9% of the total student enrollment but 36.1% of all students expelled and 34.2% of all students suspended.

Punitive responses such as suspension fail to meet critical student needs:

> "Children who face suspension because of drugs, weapons, thefts or assault have very serious problems. They need to know that people care about them and will take the time to analyze their situation and try to help them, not reject them."
>
> Josiane Gregoire, YES Change

The needs of withdrawn students are also frequently ignored; instead, they are punished for poor achievement or attendance:

> "A child out of school who is under 12 does not show up on the crime statistics; he is not mugging senior citizens or smoking marijuana in the last car of the train.

> You won't find him or her loitering in front of your building... The chronic truant we work with at Rheedlan is more likely to be at home in front of the television during school hours... The child will probably be behind his peers, won't have any friends. School might seem alien and unfriendly, the work will seem scary and intimidating, and, most of all, there will be no adult there to express these concerns to, no one who will help the child make a difficult adjustment. This is why truancy becomes a vicious cycle for so many children."
>
> Geoffrey Canada
> Rheedlan Foundation

A recent publication by the National School Boards Association, Towards Better and Safer Schools, was cited by Janet Price of Advocates for Children:

> "Policy-makers who hope to secure such [a safe and orderly] environment cannot merely rely on external controls--such as more visible police, more guards, or better alarm systems--or traditional approaches--such as punishment, removing troublemakers, and similar measures--which harden delinquent behavior patterns, alienate troubled youth from the schools, and foster distrust."

This observation was born out by a National Institute of Education study, "Disruption in 600 Schools." The authors, G. Gottfredson and D. Daiger, concluded that for both junior and senior high schools, the more punitive teachers' attitudes and behavior were, the more likely teachers were to be the victims of both crime and verbal abuse in school. This study also found that where ambiguous sanctions, such as lowering grades as a disciplinary practice, are used, teacher victimization is greater. In contrast, the more students perceive rule enforcement as fair and clear, the less teachers are victimized.

At a seminar convened by the New York City Mayor's and Chancellor's Joint Task Force on School Safety, Bruce Haslam of the National Institute for Education summarized what research has proven to be the typical characteristics of orderly schools. Many are the same characteristics identified in generally effective schools, including comprehensive programming, the use of peer and parental influence to accomplish program goals, individualized instruction, smaller school settings, staff involvement in school improvement activities.

THE END RESULTS: TOO MANY STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL

Clearly, schools are not responsible for many of the factors which make adolescents unhappy, or which deny them meaningful career opportunities. But the problems that witnesses describe have severely reduced educational opportunity and effec-

tiveness, particularly for poor, minority, female and special needs students. The resulting damage to academic achievement, self-image, and aspiration lead directly to a disengagement with schooling that has reached epidemic levels.

Dr. Luis Reyes reported the findings of ASPIRA's Summary Report on Racial and Ethnic High School Drop-out Rates in New York City. For the four year period ending in June 1982, the study demonstrated that Hispanic students experienced an 80% drop-out rate, Black students a 72% rate, and whites a 50% rate, with the overall Citywide rate at 68%.

The failure of public education for the vast majority of urban students and poor non-urban students is incontrovertible and calamatous. Witnesses described many sides of the problem:

> "I hated school. It was overcrowded; teachers didn't care; students walked out and acted up and no one did anything to help the situation...After a while, I began spending my time sleeping in class or walking the halls. Finally, I decided to hang out on the streets. I did this for two years. During this entire time, I received about three cards in the mail from Jay [John Jay High School], asking where I was. Luckily, I always got the mail before anyone in my family did. That was it. End of John Jay."
>
> Lisa Ferguson, Student

> "State Department of Education figures show that while school district enrollments are declining throughout Long Island, drop-out rates in many of these districts are increasing. In some, the drop-out rates have been reported as high as 8-10% [per year]. There persists in these identified 'problem districts' the much discussed cycle of behavior problems, leading to out-of-school suspensions, leading to deepening academic and continuing behavior problems, leading to more and longer suspensions, and often resulting in dropping out. Many have labeled this the 'push-out' syndrome."
>
> Adele Shapiro, LI Advocacy Center

Dr. Gloria Matera, Director of the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center in upstate New York, cited studies which estimate that 80-90% of all migrant children drop out of school. She quoted one farmerworker's explanation: "They don't go to school because they know they can have a job pushing a mop or picking potatoes. They say, 'I can't do anything better than I already have.' That's what makes them drop out." Dr. Matera described another farmworker who is "sixteen, has a girlfriend who is pregnant and has dropped out to earn money for his emerging family."

"Sex bias in education limits both the educational aspirations of girls and their later opportunities. It also contributes significantly to teenage pregnancy. Researchers believe that young people who are poor achievers in school and who have low educational aspirations are more likely to be sexually involved and therefore at risk of pregnancy. Studies conclude that if an adolescent girl feels that she is not going to be a high achiever and that there are no jobs or opportunities for her, she may decide that having a child at age 16 may not really disrupt her life... It should be no surprise to learn that pregnancy is the major known cause of drop-outs among school-age females in the United States, accounting for approximately 80% of the female drop-out population."

Rhoda Schulzinger, FARE

"Who are these students who drop out and why do they drop out? The reasons given by the youngsters are broad-based. They are reasons all of us know and all of us have known. There are the young women who are pregnant or who have children at home they must care for... There are the students who have been kicked out of their homes and have no place to live. There are those who are embarassed to go to school because they don't have clothes they are comfortable in, and there are those who need to work to support themselves and their families and school gets in the way.

There are those who have been out of school for many years because of peer pressure, failure in school, poor self-image, boredom--who are afraid to come back and who have tried to come back, but the bureaucratic process has gotten in the way. There are those who, when leaving school, have become involved in crime and drugs or alcohol and see no way out so that they can plan their future. And then there are the large numbers whose academic attainment is so low, in view of their age, that they feel they can no longer deal with school and that there is no reason to come to school. And then there are others whose problems of adolescence are so overwhelming, their lack of relationships to their families so exaggerated, and those who see no possibility that their education relates to a further career."

Rae Linefsky, Operation Success
Federation Employment and
Guidance Service (FEGS)

We cannot continue to abandon more than two-thirds of all the students who begin high school in New York City, 80% of migrant children, 80% of teenage mothers, 90% of students with spe-

cial needs--or refuse to question how an education system could produce such damaging results, such a terrible waste of young people's lives. As many of our witnesses insisted, we know more than enough about the causes. At issue are the choices we make to address them.

The Hearing described a record of school success which can be tapped. This record of effective programs, promising experiments and viable alternatives throughout the system, tells us that school failure is not inevitable, that children are not the problem. In the following section, we examine the new approaches and policies which witnesses put forward in answer to the school crisis.

IV. NEW APPROACHES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The daily reality of chronic underfunding, discrimination, low expectations, and the school's structural inability to respond to individual student need is overwhelming to many teachers, students and parents. Yet, many participants in the education process have developed alternative programs and policies which offer effective responses to the need for genuine school improvement. These experiments and proposals, some sweeping and some modest, also represent the outlines of an agenda to be brought before the State legislature, city governments and boards of education.

RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL FINANCE

When it comes to funding, the universal call is MORE. Witnesses at the Hearing were emphatic that the problems confronting public education are not primarily those of technique, but of the financial support available for getting successful programs to more children. Bigger budgets do not guarantee effective schooling, but they are an absolutely necessary prerequisite for dealing with the conditions of inequity and neglect which have placed children at risk.

Disparities in funding among school districts were well documented in the Levittown case (Levittown Free Union School District v. Nyquist), which challenged the inequitable distribution of revenues. While the state's highest court has upheld the constitutionality of unequal funding, remedies are clearly available through the state legislature.

One recommendation put forward by the PTA was for New York State to increase its aid to local districts from 40% to 50% of costs. The PTA also recommends "the greater use of income as a determinent of local district wealth as a step in the right direction." In addition, there were numerous calls for changes in the state funding formula to reflect equity on the basis of student need. NYC Chancellor Nathan Quinones called for the elimination of "grandfathering" practices which prevent the reduction of aid to well-endowed districts, while there is a rising population of needy students in systems like New York City.

On the local level, the PTA called for the removal of "caps" on school revenues:

> "In New York State, both large and small cities operate their school districts under taxing limitations that affect their ability to provide all the programs and services that urban children are known to need. PTA supports the removal of all unreasonable legislative or constitutional restrictions on public school financing."
>
> Judy Thomas, NYS PTA

It was widely recommended districts revise their criteria for per pupil allocations to account for total school enrollment, the incidence of special and compensatory needs among students, and the level of supportive services required to keep students in school. Further change was urged in broadening the New York City formula for allocations to high schools to reflect more than academic services:

> "If schools get income based on the number of academic courses offered, how often will teachers be employed in non-credit counselling sessions, attendance follow-up or curriculum planning?"
>
> Eileen Foley, PEA

Several speakers expressed concern that without substantial increases in school funding for all areas of need, there will be growing competition for existing monies which pits special and compensatory programs against mainstream services, and pits the pursuit of excellence against the right to equity. Specific concerns were raised about the impact of the Regents Action Plan in an interchange between Board of Inquiry members Les Goldberg and David Jones, and Regent Norma Gluck, who testified on the more rigorous academic standards and curriculum requirements adopted in the Plan. Mr. Goldberg, who directs programs for youth offenders, commented:

> "I oversee 58 juvenile facilities. I'm concerned. My kids come to me 5-6 years behind in reading and math. These kids are placed in the state prison system... 80% of our population require remedial education. I heard [Regent Gluck] mention more and more requirements. I respectfully would like to know what the Regents are doing to keep kids in school? What are you doing to motivate kids and what are you doing to keep them out of my system?"
>
> Les Goldberg,
> Deputy Executive Director
> NYS Division for Youth

Ms. Gluck's response reviewed programs the Regents had adopted or were proposing: strengthening prison education, developing school/community and school/business relationships, implementing the Resource Allocation Plan to improve the performance of schools with high drop-out rates and low academic achievment, encouraging parent participation, and supporting the institution of all-day kindergartens. The question of adequate resources for the implementation of the Regent's program was again raised:

> "By setting higher standards for high school, you're insuring, at least in my view, a greater drop-out rate, particularly among minority high school students. I'm

afraid that what you're setting up is the certainty of a higher percentage of young people in New York City who never complete their high school education. Unless you first recommend some major decreases in class size, or some major infusion of money before these new standards are put in place, I don't think you'll get any other result than a 50-60-70-80% drop-out rate among poor children in the city system."

David R. Jones
Executive Director
NYC Youth Bureau

In reply, Ms. Gluck emphasized the strong remedial components built into the Regents Action Plan and the flexibility of the new curriculum requirements. The funding implications of the Plan remained, however, an issue throughout the Hearing.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL FINANCE

Testimony pointed to the following general recommendations for reforming and enlarging funding to education:

1. Increase the state's share of contributions to school operating aid.
2. Develop new revenue sources and decrease reliance on unequal tax bases in local districts.
3. Revise the state operating aid formula to reflect equitable per student spending throughout the state, accounting for the extra cost of educating students with special needs.
4. Monitor the district distribution of both categorical funds and operating aid to individual schools, to insure fairness.
5. Target the state distribution of federal block grant funds under Chapter 2 to the high-need districts.
6. Increase federal funding for categorical programs to enable school systems to serve all eligible students.
7. Coordinate funding sources for drop-out prevention, compensatory education, and programs to prevent inappropriate special education placements.

IMPROVING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In addressing school practices, testimony suggested a broad range of areas where reform would alter the basic learning environment and school support mechanisms:

...Human-scale Schooling

A top priority for school improvement was the reduction of class size and the reduction of student-staff ratios. Another dimension was the call to reduce school size as well:

> "There are solutions and I believe they lie in the creation of much smaller schools. The Board has a huge investment in a property like Monroe High School and does not want to waste the space... But 2,000 or 2,500 of our students simply cannot be educated in such a warehouse environment. Our staff-developed redesign plan calls for splitting off three mini-schools from Monroe in order to create more supportive environments. Where smaller schools have been created, as at Bronx Regional and Pacific High School in Brooklyn, we hear that students much like our own are able to do much, much better academically.
>
> Even with the existing huge buildings, an innovative approach involving the teacher in a personal way with, say, 30 students would be desirable. Whether this is termed a "house plan" or "school family," the goal would be to establish a tie over several years between one staff member and a given number of students and their families. This has been tried in a few experimental locations in the system, but for the many thousands who pass through Monroe, there are such ties only by accident."
>
> Mike Cooney, Teacher

...Restoring Facilities

The pervasive deterioration of school facilities was another immediate concern of parents, teachers and administrators. In New York City, the custodial practices of the Board of Education were criticized on several counts, with a focus on the need for more decentralized services and more timely attention to local school problems. An innovative approach to improving the school plant, and inducing more respect for school property, centered on the involvement of local communities. Mike Cooney recommended that community members be enlisted, on both a paid and voluntary basis, to undertake repairs, assist in lunch programs, and help maintain school buildings. Given the extent of disrepair in many urban schools, increased funding is essential to improvements in facilities.

...School Order

A major issue in establishing a school climate of order, mutual respect and high expectations is the conduct of disciplinary action. Most witnesses felt that approaches to discipline which emphasize punitive measures against offenders, and neglect the need for supportive services, are self-defeating. Too often, punitive discipline serves as a mechanism for excluding high-risk youth in order to avoid dealing with the problems they present in school. One set of recommendations involved revising suspension and expulsion practices through changes, which include:

> "...alternatives to out-of-school suspensions, perhaps mandatory in-school suspension programs; elimination of open-ended long-term suspensions. Presently, a bill is efore the legislature which would limit suspensions to no more than 45 consecutive school days..."
>
> Adele Shapiro,
> LI Advocacy Center

Veola Hawkes presented the conclusions of the Task Force on Violent and Disruptive behavior in Rochester Public Schools, sponsored by the Rochester Urban League, which found that punitive action in the high schools was "out of control" and particularly discriminatory towards minority youth. The Task Force recommended a new approach which included training programs on school order techniques for staff, students and parents, along with closer monitoring of disciplinary practices and prompt parent notification of behavioral problems and punitive action.

Student witnesses at the Hearing called for greater effort on three fronts of school disorder: stricter enforcement against disruption and crime, stricter adherence to student rights to due process in disciplinary action, and more education around drug and alcohol abuse. Educators raised the need for improved recruitment and training procedures of security personnel.

...Guidance and Peer Support

The need for schools to provide more individual attention and personal interaction was also applied to the current crisis in guidance counselling services, a crisis most often cited by students at the Hearing:

> "My feeling is that first, schools need more counselling services. When students are uncertain about their future, they need sound, practical advice. To make any kind of decision in desperation, especially decisions regarding education and employment, is dangerous. You waste so much time and lose so much enthusiasm."
>
> Janice Jenkins, YES Change

In enlarging the sense of school as learning community, with shared expectations among all students and staff, the Foundation for Youth Involvement student survey underscored the value of increased peer participation in guidance functions:

> "The proposed 'mentor' program enjoyed the most support among three education proposals. The proposal was supported by 81% of the students... Mentor programs have been proposed by many educators and politicians... and the low capital costs, coupled with the widespread student support, make it a program worth pursuing."
>
> Monique Toran, FYI

> "View students as a vital resource in the education process. Develop opportunities for peer tutoring, peer teaching and peer counselling."
>
> Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich, Principal

...Integrating Services

The single most striking feature of the successful programs for high risk students was that they provide comprehensive services. Educational achievement was not seen in isolation from the entire range of social needs and barriers which make it difficult for children to succeed or even stay in school. Chancellor Quinones, among many other witnesses, argued against the fragmentation of services and cited the City-As-School alternative program as an example of successfully integrating supportive resources.

The call for greater coordination of services, and school-based human service delivery, was also widespread in the discussion of truancy, teen parenting, special education, job readiness, bi-lingual programs, early childhood programs, and particularly drop-out prevention work.

> "Ask anyone who is in this room, ask anyone who works with youth whether they be educators, social workers, health professionals, employers, and they will tell you that there is no single reason for a student dropping out of school. The approach to a better education for all of our youth must be individualized and comprehensive. It must gather together the experiences and the knowledge of a multitude of disciplines. In addition to new approaches for providing better academic and basic skills curriculum...we must re-commit ourselves to a comprehensive approach which includes a broad range of support services."
>
> Rae Linefsky, FEGS

...Early Childhood Education and Child Care

The importance of early childhood enrichment programs as the foundation for later academic and social performance in school has been well established by Head Start and similar programs. Quality child care is also a critical factor for working and single parents in supplementing the guidance and developmental supports needed by their children. A clear recommendation was that the standards of quality set in those examples must be applied more widely, to improve programs that remain largely custodial and to open programs for the 60% of families who cannot get these services. In addition, the recommendation was made to extend access to after-school child care:

> "After-school services must be expanded to accomodate larger numbers of children, including 5-year old kindergarten children. The Board of Education's facilities must be made available for use by community groups to run after-school programs.
>
> Velmanette Montgomery,
> Advocacy for Childcare NYC

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Testimony emphasized the following general recommendations for improving the learning environment:

1. Reduce class size and student/adult ratios.
2. Restructure school organization to replicate successful models that give individual attention to diverse student needs.
3. Establish an upgraded program for school repair and maintenance, involving the community.
4. Develop supportive rather than punitive programs to deal with behavioral problems, limiting out-of-school suspensions and strictly enforcing due process protections.
5. Expand guidance and social counseling programs, including students as resources for peer support.
6. Integrate and coordinate the range of social services available within the school that address the multiple needs of high risk students.
7. Increase access to pre-school programs and after school child care, applying the standards of quality demonstrated in Head Start.
8. Involve parents, teachers and students in decision-making for school improvement.

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

Throughout the Hearing, witnesses emphasized that, as Myrna Cooper put it, "the classroom is the basic unit of change." In discussing priorities for instructional improvement, testimony centered on the need for better teacher support systems and the need to substantially revise testing and tracking practices.

...Teacher Support

Teachers in public schools seem regularly to receive controversial treatment in discussions of school reform, since they can be seen as both victims and agents of school failure. The Hearing did bring out a very clear call, however, to increase starting salaries as a requisite for attracting more talented people to the profession. One important warning was not to neglect the need to retain and reward experienced staff.

In addition, there was a widespread call to reduce class size as a fundamental element of improving working conditions:

> "The issue is reducing class size. Let me put it within a number of recommendations. I immediately supported all-day kidergartens and the reduction of class sizes in the first grade. Sufficient? No--better than what it was. Next year we should reduce class size in the second grade; the year after that, in the third grade. The key focus should be on grades K-3, as the critical years for intervention on the lives of youngsters."
>
> NYC Chancellor Nathan Quinones

Another dimension of teacher support was the call for more staff involvement in both training programs and local school decision-making. Teachers discussed the importance of teacher involvement in designs for school improvement, calling for approaches which rely upon the experience, initiative and energy of in-school staff.

> "We appreciate the primacy of concern regarding teachers and their workplace, and the sympathy and attention given our profession. But good intentions are not enough. Ideas, prescriptions, designs, substance are needed if change is to come about, and we will have to be integral to making that difference. For if we do not participate in generating solutions, others, no matter how well--intentioned, will do it for us and to us. And we know that this kind of change, done in the name of reform through mandates, dictates and ukases, has a history of failure."
>
> Myrna Cooper, Director,
> UFT Teacher Centers Consortium

The teacher center concept has been one successful approach to engaging educators in self-directed professional development. The UFT Teacher Centers Consortium in New York City is an in-service, school-based project. Each center begins by assessing teachers' needs. The center plans and conducts activities responsive to those needs and the specific teaching environments encountered. Most importantly, the teacher center utilizes the expertise of practicing teachers in a voluntary, non-judgemental assistance model, rather than in an assessment model which has punitive consequences. The Hearing offered other examples:

> "What might happen to the pressure to excel, to reform education, were to come from the men and women responsible for getting the work done, the teachers?... One such program, designed by teachers in response to the training needs of special educators, is the United Federation of Teachers' Special Educator Support Program... This program demonstrates what can be achieved when practitioners have the opportunity to identify their concerns and share their successes."
>
> Howard Gollub, Teacher Educator

The Special Educator Support Program, currently operating in twenty New York City schools, provides Teacher Consultants who train classroom teachers in each school, forming a network which encourages all staff to share concerns and problems, successful practice and new instructional strategies. Specific activities include in-class assistance, study groups and workshops, intervisitions and coaching sessions for new special educators. The approach helps teachers develop their own materials, practice new techniques, strengthen classroom management, and participate in peer evaluation. Above all, it offers peer support to new instructors who confront demanding classrooms with little formal preparation. Workshops are also organized for parents on how to help with homework, to utilize community resources, and to prepare for parent-teacher conferences. The program has generated enthusiastic support from teachers across the City, has been very favorably evaluated by administrators, and was selected by the Association of Teacher Educators as a Distinguished Program in Teacher Education.

Beyond teacher-initiated development programs, the concept of teacher participation can be extended to school administration and planning.

> "Last term, our principal charged me with heading a staff committee to develop a 'redesign plan' for the school By October and November of last fall, Monroe teachers, supervisors, counselors and a few students were staying after school without pay to work on redesigning our programs... Through a process of group meetings and consensus, [we] developed a plan for a High School of Public

> Service, which would have closer ties both with the public agencies and with the com nity, neither of which exist at present. It was an ambitious program [and indicates] evidence of the kind of educational policy teachers can and will plan when given the slightest chance. The problems of schools like Monroe can best be addressed by those working professionals who spend their lives in making the most of these extremely difficult conditions...
>
> Mike Cooney, Teacher

Teacher participation in policy and program formation can be directly assisted by a growing body of research on what makes for successful school-based improvement strategies, much of it associated with the concepts of instructionally effective schools.

> "The key dimension to more schools becoming more instructionally effective has to do with attitudes and beliefs about what is possible, given the state of the art and science of teaching and learning for poor children. Instructionally effective schools exist and can be used as an orientation, a benchmark, a set of aspirations and a source of practical guidance... Because substantial improvements are increasingly being documented, there is reason for public school people to return to what brought many of them into the profession in the first place--a desire to help the most needy children."
>
> Dr. Dale Mann, Teachers College
> Chair, Department of
> Educational Administration

...Testing and Tracking

A general concern throughout the Hearing was the increasing segregation of student populations. The growth of separate and inequal school structures has become endemic in test-driven, highly tracked systems, with demonstably damaging results on the expectations and opportunities afforded to high risk students. Many speakers called for more heterogeneous grouping and more heterogeneous programs, accessible to all students:

> "We must break the tracking barrier which locks students into compensatory education and prevents them from participating in enrichment programs. To this end, schools must design programs which go beyond teaching the basics. Reading and computing are not sufficient unto themselves. Students must be able to think, to make decisions, and use their reading and computing skills to acquire other knowledge which will enable them to become responsive and responsible members of this society."
>
> Dr. Peter Negroni, Suprintendent

Chancellor Quinones spoke of the dangers of stigmatizing and creaming students through the development of magnet schools for hign achievers. He called for new requirements mandating specialized schools to accept more diverse student enrollments. This view was strongly backed by educators in heavily disadvantaged communities:

> "Support the comprehensive neighborhood school. Limit the creation of additional education option schools. Require that education option schools retain and educate all the students they admit."
>
> Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich, Principal

Another target for reform was the increasing application of standardardized testing as the primary mechanism for student evaluation and assignment:

> "If we must mandate, let's mandate more extensive time for parents and teachers to meet together, and better tools for communicating their respective knowledge of children when they do meet. We do not need an army of outside experts to stand in between them, making judgements about whether Johnny knows how to read, can do his arithmetic, knows how to spell or can write an intelligent sentence...
>
> For our children's sake, we must defend our intelligence as parents and teachers... Once we have confidence again in our own capacity to make judgements about simple matters, such as 'how well does my child read,' then the less we have to fear from any tests. Then we can use tests, and not be abused by them."
>
> Deborah Meier, School Director

Recommendations called for decreasing the reliance on standardized, norm-referenced tests for individual assessment purposes, and for increasing evaluation instruments which can be used to individualize instruction. Such instruments include the teacher and parent observation techniques for assessing each student's achievements and needs, cited by Ms. Meier. It was recommended that tests which are used in program selection should be strictly relevant to the selection purpose. In testing which is primarily geared to accountability and research objectives, it was proposed that student samples be used, to avoid both the disruption that intensive testing causes in the classroom and the inappropriate labeling of individual students. Ms. Meier cited the federal government's National Assessment of Educational Progress as a positive model.

...Libraries

The shocking neglect of the school library system in New York City, which is duplicated by varying degrees in other fiscally strapped urban areas, brought forth a concrete proposal from the American Reading Council:

> "What would it cost to restore a functioning library to every public school? We propose an immediate allocation of $15 million in the City budget. This would allow schools to buy the books and periodicals, and hire the librarians and supervisors, needed to re-establish good school libraries. Can New York City afford these sums, miniscule in a budget of more than $17 billion? Can it afford not to afford them?"
>
> Julia Palmer, ARC Director

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

Testimony highlighted the following general recommendations for improving instruction and teaching performance:

1. Improve working conditions, particularly student/-teacher ratios, and increase salaries for teaching staff to competitive, professional levels.
2. Involve teachers in curriculum development, in-service training and local school decision-making, particularly in designs for school improvement.
3. Reduce reliance on homogeneous grouping and tracking policies which restrict educational opportunity and stigmatize students.
4. Reform the selection practices of optional enrollment programs to ensure that magnet schools do not "cream" the highest achievers and that neighborhood schools are not "dumping grounds" for at-risk students; ensure that all schools reflect the general make-up of the student population.
5. Replace the use of standardized testing as the sole determinant of placement and promotion with multiple and individualized assessment techniques.
6. Provide functioning libraries in all schools.

LINKING SCHOOL AND WORK

A number of speakers directly addressed the corrosive effects of unemployment and dead-end job prospects on student motivation, as well as on school expectations for their achievement. There is clearly no simple solution which education can bring to these larger economic problems. However, there were some general recommendations about how advocates for school improvement can pursue the issues of job preparation and access:

> "If society is to stimulate and meet the employment expectations of youth, education reform must be linked to job creation. The most obvious arena--and traditionally the most successful--to focus our attention as far as job creation is concerned is in the public sector and community service and nonprofit jobs. Not only have these sectors offered employment opportunities to the broadest spectrum of workers (particularly minorities and women) but also, the most equitable opportunities for advancement... If public educators are worried about the divestiture of public education, they should be equally concerned about the divestiture of public services in general... Government is the appropriate social mechanism through which we can go beyond the deficiencies of the market to promote job creation and determine the social value of jobs."
>
> Deborah Bell, DC 37 AFSCME

Economist Howard Stanback amplified this view by discussing four points of broad social reform critical in school-to-work linkages: (1) a democratic industrial policy which targets public investment for community economic development in areas most in need; (2) the enlargement of public sector employment, especially in human services and neighborhood reconstruction; (3) the restoration of affirmative action for minorities and women; (4) the equalization of earnings through a higher minimum wage, union rights, pay equity and comparable worth. Dr. Stanback advocated that high school training programs should be geared to community economic development activity, integrating local youth in neighborhood projects through the public sector. Dr. Stanback also urged new kinds of career education in the schools to give students a more realistic understanding of the economic conditions they confront.

There was also a call for the extension of school partnerships with employers and community members:

> "Use community resources, including local businessmen and businesses which could employ students in new hourly arrangements which promote learning and build skills... Expand contacts with science and industry, and reach out to individuals in organizations with special expertise...

> Rethink certification requirements and permit those with skills in industry and business, in addition to those with BA degrees, to teach in the schools... Encourage parents who have special areas of expertise to team with licensed personnel to bring new technology and their own competence into the classroom."
>
> Dr. Evelyn Jones Rich, Principal

...Vocational Education

There was a general call for improving vocational schools by updating the curriculum to account for new types of jobs, technologies and skills. Chancellor Quinones also cited the need to expand work-study programs. Another recommendation was to broaden the scope of vocational education:

> "Rather than emphasizing narrow training, the emphasis in the schools must be on basic thinking, literacy and computing skills. In addition, often neglected social, communication and problem-solving skills should be stressed, to build a foundation for future job flexibility... Further, it is important to recognize that, even though not everyone will be able to advance occupationally, they should be schooled in the expectation of economic advancement and in the breadth of knowledge necessary to find satisfaction outside the workplace."
>
> Deborah Bell, DC 37 AFSCME

The need to integrate career preparation throughout the school experience, and to develop citizenship skills alongside vocational skills, was raised in a proposal for more community service programs:

> "At the same time that we design career awareness programs in the early elementary grades, we must include meaningful work experiences from early adolescence through high school... We are likewise responsible for fostering social accountability--community service should be an integral part of the high schools' work experience program. A meaningful high school instructional program with a good work experience component will go a long way towards decimating the drop-out rate."
>
> Dr. Peter Negroni, Superintendent

Combatting sex discrimination was another priority concern in vocational programs. The following specific recommendations were made to correct the widespread bias and exclusion facing female students:

> "Review vocational recruitment materials to ensure that

they are free of sex bias and include images of girls and women working in the school or trade.

Encourage guidance counsellors and faculty advisors to inform female students about 'nontraditional' vocational options, including information about wages and job opportunities available in traditionally male fields.

Develop programs to attract young women to predominantly male schools. Offer girls both skills training for occupational fields that are currently mixed by sex (such as data processing and graphic arts) and first year exploratory courses for 'nontraditional' fields.

Establish special services for the girls, including counselling, support groups and cluster scheduling.

Encourage principals to provide leadership in the elimination of discriminatory treatment and practices in their schools. They may include demanding staff accountability, ensuring accessible student grievance mechanisms, and making concerted efforts to hire female staff, especially shop teachers.

Develop comprehensive educational programs for pregnant students that provide career counselling and exploration, as well as work experience."

· Rhoda Schulzinger, FARE

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LINKING SCHOOL AND WORK

Testimony highlighted the following general recommendations for improving school-to-work linkages and vocational preparation:

1. Enlarge public job creation, particularly in human services and community reconstruction, and develop youth service projects to upgrade educational and employment skills.
2. Extend school partnerships, not only with business and industry, but also with government agencies, non-profit organizations, unions and community institutions.
3. Broaden the scope of vocational education to include communication, social and problem-solving skills.
4. Combat sex-bias and discrimination in vocational program placement, and increase efforts to inform students of their options in "non-traditional" programs.

DROP-OUT PREVENTION

The record of successful drop-out prevention programs tells us that intervention must start early, that supportive services must be comprehensive and individualized, that learning environments must be personal and flexible. Nearly every speaker addressing drop-out issues cited the danger posed by the New York State Regents Action Plan, which raises graduation requirements without substantially increasing state aid to compensatory and supportive programming. The additional requirements were seen as new barriers for students already floundering in inadequate schools.

Another barrier was identified in the increased use of promotional "gates," based on standardized tests, which hold back students who are performing below grade level. While there was no enthusiasm for purely social promotions, there was a recurring call for alternative remediation programs to allow students to function within their peer group and make up lost ground. Dr. Archer Dong and Dr. Luis Reyes argued that promotional mandates particularly need to be revised for non-English speaking students, who fall far behind their peers and feel most acutely and literally "out of place" in their schools. Chancellor Quinones recommended that the age limit of 21 for public high school be modified for ESL students, who are on average 1-4 years behind their grade level.

Another high-risk student group is teenage mothers. Recommendations for keeping young mothers in school included:

> "Provide a continuum of services for pregnant students beginning with early prenatal care and extending into the early years of parenthood... Revise policies which present barriers to the continuation of education during and after pregnancy, such as unfair attendance policies which penalize young mothers... Provide student parents with access to convenient, affordable infant and child care."
>
> Rhoda Schulzinger, FARE

In addition to distinct services or procedural changes which help keep potential drop-outs in school, a number of witnesses pointed to the critical need for re-structuring the basic learning environment as the most effective preventive approach. Several models for such alternative school programs have developed in New York City. One example cited was the South Brooklyn Community High School, an alternative program run collaboratively by a private non- profit agency and the NYC Division of High Schools. A former drop-out who returned to attend South Brooklyn outlined the ingredients that make her new school different. They included personal relationships between students and staff, an atmosphere of respect for each student, small program size and extracurricular activities, firm discipline and follow-through with student problems, and strong peer group support.

The Public Education Association reported a three-year study of successful practice in New York City's alternative schools. "The first finding is that the drop-out problem is substantially remediable using the alternative school model of school organization," testified Eileen Foley, Director of Educational Studies for PEA. The report also indicates that:

> "Drop-outs are identifiable by their attendance and credit accumulation patterns in their first high school semester. Moreover, they are not necessarily the least able students academically. This finding makes it clear that early intervention is not only indicated, [but] potentially very effective."

PEA's findings on the common characteristics of the most successful alternative schools echoes Ms. Ferguson's description of South Brooklyn Community High School:

> "They were all quite small. Everybody knew everybody else. Further, new and appropriate roles for teachers and students encouraged more participation in the life of the school... Teachers were actively involved in school administration, student advisement and policy-making. Students were part of the admissions team, made decisions regarding school rules, and provided academic support to other youngsters...
>
> To make room for these new roles and responsibilities, teachers were given time in the course of the average school week to plan school improvement programs cooperatively and to run group counseling sessions with youngsters. In these very different, yet mutually reinforcing ways, alternative schools generated a fundamental shift from the 19th century model of the school-as-factory to the primary group model of the school as learning community."
>
> Eileen Foley, PEA

Another model presented at the Hearing was Operation Success, funded by the New York State Department of Education and operated by the non-profit agency, Federation Employment and Guidance Service (FEGS), in cooperation with the United Federation of Teachers and the New York City Board of Education. Its success amplifies the value of holistic approaches to changing the interactions of teachers, students and parents in drop-out prevention work and the value of linking the school experience with vocational and human services. Operation Success has achieved impressive results in its first year of activity, involving at risk students in a variety of counseling and work experience programs designed to match their own needs and their particular school environment.

FEGS Assistant Director Rae Linefsky reported: "A study by the Queens College Center for Labor and Urban Programs, Research and Analysis Division, showed that 93% of these 1,800 high risk youngsters [in the program] were still enrolled at year's end or had graduated." Among those 1,700 high risk students retained, 232 were drop-outs brought back into school. Moreover, Operation Success demonstrated significant school effects. Overall enrollment at the five targeted high schools (Seward Park, Boys and Girls, Columbus, Erasmus and Edison) "rose 10% during the program's first year of activity, compared to an 8% decline in the prior year." Class attendance among program students also improved significantly. Student attitudes toward teacher receptivity and toward school-career linkages also significantly improved.

One of the Operation Success participants described to the Hearing how a staffperson had helped her join the program and stay in school:

> "He called up my mother and invited us in for an interview. He spoke to us. He tild me it was time for me to make a decision and that it was my decision to make, no one else's; that it was my life. He spoke to me; he talked to me; he didn't talk down to me just because of the problems I'd had in high school... They were all understanding and listened to you and treated you as an adult... There was no problem they considered too petty."
>
> Yvette Arroyo, Student

Most of the successful alternative programs and services reported at the Hearing were developed through extensive effort and collaboration with the New York City school system. But there was also testimony from one community group which has been fighting for many years to improve their neighborhood zoned high school.

> "We have been struggling to improve a school which systematically pushed out almost half its student population, misprogrammed over half its remaining students, and had, overall, very little expectation for the entire, mostly poor and mostly minority student body... After eight years, we maintain a cautiously optimistic stance. We feel that John Jay, like many city high schools, needs total internal redesign and restructuring."
>
> Bonnie Jenevich, CCOCOS
> Community Committee
> on Children Out of School

Closely related to drop-out prevention is the need to improve attendance. Several promising developments were reported at the Hearing. One was a bill sponsored by Jose Serrano, Chair

of the Assembly Education Committee, which has appropriated $28 million for statewide distribution to schools with low attendance rates. In New York City, which received over $22 million of the funds, the issue is how well that money will be targeted within the districts.

The Rheedlan Foundation has focused on truancy prevention services, which include the early identification of truants, close monitoring of attendance on a daily basis, and referral mechanisms needed to help multi-problem families of young truants, many of whom become drop-outs well before the 8th grade. Rheedlan's work not only identifies substantial numbers of chronic truants between the ages of 5-12, but also demonstrates that these children and their parents can be reached through intensive, targeted intervention programs.

> "It's harder to spot problems in younger children and it's harder to deliver services... but you can make a difference with a seven-year-old."
>
> Geoffrey Canada,
> Rheedlan Foundation

Project CHILD (Comprehensive Help for Individual Differences) is a similar program developed by the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center. The program provides comprehensive resourcs, counseling and support services to migrant families as part of its truancy prevention approach.

> "The education of any child cannot take place in a vacuum isolated from family or community, or ignoring family and personal needs which may be handicaps to learning."
>
> Dr. Gloria Matera, Director
> BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DROP-OUT PREVENTION

Testimony on drop-out prevention centered on the following general recommendations:

1. Intervene as soon as students begin to fall behind, providing help within the peer group, rather than relying on retention or tracking.
2. Guarantee that every student entitled to remediation is provided with an appropriate remediation plan and services.

3. Provide comprehensive supportive services within the school, using the models developed in alternative schools to establish personalized and responsive programs.
4. Focus on truancy prevention in the early years, collaborating with parents and social service agencies to address family as well as student needs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Discussion of problems in special education pointed to a number of pressing needs:

1. Improve both physical and instructional access to mainstream classrooms.
2. Eliminate financial disincentives for mainstreaming students with handicapping conditions.
3. Vastly upgrade the training and recruitment of special education staff.
4. Meaningfully involve parents in designing and implementing Individual Education Programs (IEPs).
5. Increase collaboration between regular and special education staff: in maintaining at-risk students in the mainstream, remedying systemic school problems, implementing students' IEPs, and providing transitional services to de-certified students.
6. Prevent discriminatory placement of "hard to teach" children by implementing the evaluation practices required in the Lora v. Board of Education judgement and in newly-issued NYC Chancellor's regulations; maintain records at the building level on who is referred, for what reasons and with what results.
7. Enforce and fund the entitlement to special education services for the many children who remain shut out.
8. Ensure students with handicapping conditions equitable access to vocational and enrichment programs, magnet schools, and other education option programs.
9. Establish the expectation that special education students can and will achieve a regular high school diploma and structure curriculum and staff accordingly; enhance programs for students in the 18-21 year age range so that the full entitlement to free public education can be exercised.

For the severely handicapped, special education services remain primitive at best. Testimony by a parent advocate for

autistic children pointed to the key areas for improving services, many of which apply equally to other children whose disabilities require high levels of support:

> "At the federal, state and local level, education departments must take a more vigrous role in encouraging programs to provide regular, appropriate contact with non-handicapped children as part of their planned program of habilitation and normalization.
>
> Public schools should use the new technologies with a proven record of success with the severely handicaped, thereby reducing, if not eliminating, the need for residential placements. New York State must make a commitment to education even the most severely handicaped child in a setting close to home, thereby making it possible for the family to maintain a relationship with the child.
>
> Programs must be designed to prepare children for adulthood... Curricula must be reflect an emphasis on teaching those functional skills needed to live successfully in the community. Activities of daily living such as cooking, cleaning, dressing and travel, along with social skills, communication and functional academics must be stressed... There must be better communication between adolescent school programs and the adult service delivery system."
>
> Margaret Raustiala, NYS Society for Autistic Children

Recommendations for the severely handicapped thus include:

1. Provide severely impaired adolescents with vocational and life training skills to enhance their independence as adults.
2. Encourage state and local education agencies to take the lead in working with other agencies to plan for the future of severely impaired students prior to their reaching age 21, in accordance with recent state legislation.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The foremost recommendation for improving bilingual programs was to increase funding levels dramatically so that bilingual instruction becomes a genuine entitlement for all eligible children. Other recommendations emerging from the testimony included:

1. An immediate campaign to recruit and train qualified bilingual teachers and support staff.

2. Broader curriculum in bilingual programs, including bicultural content and greater access to enrichment programs, to ensure that students receive the full educational equivalent to English-speaking classes.
3. Revision of promotional and age barriers for student placement, to ensure that students with Limited English Proficiency are provided age-appropriate settings.
4. More intensive drop-out prevention and supportive services within the school setting.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

"Parents are a key resource in education. Their loss, their non-involvement hurts the whole system." The sentiments of teacher educator Howard Gollub were amplified by a wide range of witnesses at the Hearing. Recommendations for how to make parents more effective partners in schooling included:

> "One, Parents Associations, PTAs and Parent Advisory Councils should be mandated in all school districts, cities and states...because parents are the clients/consumers of the public school system, and they have both the right and responsibility to shape issues and monitor what's happening (or not happening) in their schools.... because parent involvement supports the schools and builds a constituency for public education.
>
> Two, PAs, PTAs and PACs should be supported with public funds... because the Parent Advisory Councils that used some of their Title I funding for training, etc., were more effective than those that didn't encourage and support parents.
>
> Three, training on how to involve and work with parents should be a requirement for all teachers, supervisors and administrators... because parents find it difficult to make important contributions when they are thought of only as the 'ladies with the coffee pot or the candy money!' In the first place, parents aren't just 'ladies' and in the sceond place, the parent role must be determined by parents, inclusive of issues that make a significant impact on the children, the schools, the school district and the school system--a genuine partnership."
>
> Gloria Skerritt,
> United Parents Association

Ms. Skerritt saw the local and state policies now in effect, establishing the rights of parent organizations to participate in school affairs, as an important "opening wedge." She

cited numerous examples of effective parent involvement and intervention:

> "When parents have taken advantage of this opportunity, they have helped build school buildings. They have fought hard for people they thought would make their schools more effective. They have been 'extra hands' making lunch hour safer and more fun. They have paid for equipment and instructional materials, trips and other enrichment activities that limited school budgets couldn't afford. They've gotten asbestos removed from school buildings and traffic lights installed at school crossings. They've done all this and much more in their 'spare' time--time found in a day tht for many includes full-time employment and the responsibilities of managing a household...
>
> The PTA president of a Brooklyn school parlayed an idea into an after-school program that is now sponsored by the local parents association and UPA, and funded by the New York City Youth Board. The program combines an African—Caribbean cultural arts dance program with remedial reading. Parents serve as staff and volunteers. Reading test scores have improved and the program has a waiting list a mile long...
>
> Parents are their children's reading partners in a Bronx school. A contract is signed that promises 15 minutes of shared reading time a day. At the end of the year, in a genuine reversal of roles, it is the parents who get the awards for supporting their children's efforts...
>
> Learning takes a slightly different form in a Brooklyn district where parents are learning how to use computers after school, while their children are learning during the school day. In return for instruction, parents agree to tutor their children in computer literacy..."
>
> Gloria Skerritt, UPA

The United Parents Association has also sponsored the citywide High School Fair and produced several handbooks: ABCs for Parents, a primer for kindergarten and first grade parents; Curriculum Handbook, cover the K-6 grades in reading, math, and science; and Parent to Parent--An Insider's Guide for High School Parents.

A case history of parent association initiative in a school improvement program was reported by John Moscow, secretary of the PA at PS 86 in the Bronx, and an active member of Advocates for Children's Project PEACE. The PS 86 Parent Association, through a sustained campaign of exposure and pressure, forced the school and district administration to deal with the

most critical health and safety problems: broken sinks and toilets, pre-arranged fire drills, vandalism, student disorder and teacher abuse of students. The Association then decided to take on the quality of education provided in the school:

> "We insisted that we had the right to see class schedules and the schedules of cluster teachers. The Administration resisted this, but eventually, when we were able to get those schedules, we found that where kids in the higher tracks might have gym once a week, kids in the lower tracks were getting gym three times a week. We spoke to the gym teachers to make it clear we were upset at this scheduling, but not upset at them. They told us they were upset at this scheduling as well, because it made it difficult for them to plan any kind of coherent program... We found that schedules were largely made up on the basis of friendships and animosities between administrators and teachers, with no regard to the interests of the kids. If they wanted to punish a teacher, for example, her kids might not get Art class.
>
> As a response to our pressure, the school district invited the School Improvement Program (SIP) into our school. We found SIP to be very useful and extremely effective in the school.
>
> We're now beginning to focus on the tracking system, because we feel that serious, permanent damage is done to kids by repeatedly telling them, 'You're no good and that's why you're in the F track.' Or by repeatedly putting them in the A track and telling them, 'You're okay but nobody else is worth very much.'"
>
> John Moscow, Project PEACE

Parent participation at PS 86 and too many other schools still faces fierce resistence. "We very quickly found out," Moscow concluded, "that although everyone told us how wonderful it was to have active parents, the entire force of the administration, district and the Central Board united to interfere, in every possible way, with our exercise of our rights under our Parents Association constitution."

One of the important ingredients for sustained parent involvement is training which helps parents master both the resistence of schoolpeople and the expertise required in understanding the complexities of budgeting, personnel, curriculum, assessment and school organization. Leona Gordon testified as chair of the New Rochelle Districtwide Parents Advisory Council to Chapter I, as the first vice-president of State Parents Action for Compensatory Education (SPACE) and as New York representative on the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents. She described her own transformation from a frustrated and powerless parent outsider to "a part of the decision-making process" through parent training provided for Title I advisory board members.

"I was being provided with information and training which enabled me to fulfill my responsibilities as a parent. I was learning how to help my children and others, how to help the system help all children, and how to change the system if it was not helping children.

I believe that I would not be where I am today if on October 14, 1971, the Federal Register had not printed new Title I regulations requiring each local educational agency with a Title I program to establish a districtwide Parent Advisory Council... The regulations said that parents had to be involved in the planning, development, operation and evaluation of Title I projects. This law encouraged meaningful parent involvement in the educational process, an important factor in increasing the educational achievement of educationally disadvantaged children. Compensatory programs can work to improve children's skills, but the real success stories are written when the parent is included as a partner."

Leona Gordon, SPACE

The model for successful parent involvement provided by Title I Compensatory Education programs is being endangered by federal regulations for the new Chapter I, which reduces the requirement for parent advisory councils to a vague requirement for parent consultation. In New York, parents have responded by seeking state legislation which restores the mandate for PACs in compensatory and remedial education programs to the former Title I standard. The bill, sponsored by Assembly Member Aurelia Green, passed the State Assembly in both the 1983 and 1984 sessions, but has not passed in the State Senate. The PAC bill would mandate local districts receiving state funds for remedial programs to establish district and school advisory councils, would give these councils the right to review and comment on the Comprehensive District Plan for Compensatory Programs, would give parents with students in the programs majority membership on the councils, and would provide these parents with the information needed to allow their full participation.

Early childhood programs like Headstart have also provided excellent models for the impact of parent involvement. Velmanette Montgomery, Director of Advocacy for Child Care, discussed the record of such programs where parents are an integral part of the program experience, in staff and resource capacities as well as through mandated parent advisory councils. Parent participation has helped to ensure that activities and expectations are appropriate to young children and that the children's culture, family and community experience is incorporated into the curriculum. Parents have also been effective in seeing that adequate space and child/adult ratios are maintained. Ms. Montgom-

ery cited these features as necessary criteria for successful early childhood programs. They could serve equally well as initial standards and policy recommendations for all effective schooling.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Testimony on parent involvement suggests the following general recommendations:

1. Include in all mandates for parent advisory bodies explicit standards for parental consultation, including the use of discretionary funds for training and participation, and the right to receive full information on program performance.
2. Utilize the skills and experience of active PTA, PA and PAC members to provide outreach, training and advocacy to other families.
3. Train educators as well as parents in effective techniques of parent involvement; accomodate the needs of parents, particularly those working or with small children, in structuring meetings, workshops and consultations.
4. Mandate state, district and local school Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) for all major categorical programs, according to the standards set in Head Start and Title I programs.

V. CONCLUSIONS FOR THE ADVOCACY MOVEMENT

How do policy-makers, educators, students, parents and citizens who care about our public schools build on scattered successes to make them the rule rather than the exception? How do we ensure that schools address the full range of needs of disadvantaged students, rather than using those needs as an excuse for school failure? How do we overcome the barriers to equity and excellence so sharply defined by the witnesses at the New York Hearing?

The following basic principles for improving public education guided much of the testimony and summarize our common concerns:

1. Schools work best when they are committed to serving all their students as effectively as possible. When schools cannot adequately serve all segments of their student body, every student suffers. When school districts and school systems serve some students far better than others, the entire system is devalued. Inequity and discrimination by race, sex and social class--and by educational need--are not only unjust, but corrosive to quality education.

2. Schools work best when they offer diverse and personal approaches in organization, curriculum, staffing and programming to meet the varieties of need among students. Smaller scale schools, smaller settings within schools, and reduced class size are essential ingredients for promoting diversity, without resort to the segregative and test-driven tracking policies so widely practiced today. Effective schools provide alternatives for all children.

3. Schools work best when they work collaboratively, affording principals, teachers, students, parents and communities the opportunity to participate in planning, problem-solving, decision-making, evaluation and school improvement.

4. Schools work best when they have considerable local discretion and can respond flexibly in meeting the particular needs of their students. State and local educational authorities have important responsibilities in safeguarding standards of equity and excellence. However, prescriptions, formulas and regulations which are rigidly imposed on local schools by district and state administration often prove counter-productive to effective schooling. Over-direction often substitutes for supportive resources and prevents educators from exercising professional judgement, initiative and creativity.

5. Underfunding forces all schools to provide less than adequate education and creates crisis conditions for students most at risk. Federal, state and local education revenues must

be significantly increased. The resources available for education must be based on need; the quality of education provided to our children should not be a function of the wealth of the community they reside in.

6. State and city government must not only maximize financial resources to schools, but must also ensure that those resources are effectively and fairly distributed. The state and city must ensure that students eligible for special services are accurately targeted and appropriately served. They must protect civil rights, monitor educational outcomes and provide additional assistance and guidance to schools where outcomes are unsatisfactory.

7. All state and city efforts to raise educational standards must be accompanied by the funds, staffing, training and supportive services necessary to make those standards achievable by all our students. Children whom schools have already failed should not encounter more barriers to achievement, but more support for school success. Standards must guide individual student performance, but more importantly, they must measure the school's performance. Addressing the catastrophic drop-out problem should be a first priority in all programs for excellence.

8. The goals of schooling should not be determined by a narrow conception of job destinies, as they present themselves in today's labor market. Both vocational education and the general curriculum should encourage the creativity, self-motivation, and problem-solving skills which allow students to adapt flexibly to changing job prospects and to function as active citizens and fulfilled adults.

9. Schools should be places where respect for democratic values, diverse cultures and constitutional rights are taught by example. Not only the curriculum, but the organization and tone of the school must reflect these values.

The task of reforming and improving our schools requires a commitment to equity and excellence as interdependent goals. The reform process also requires that advocates of these goals act at every level of the education system and in the larger arenas of social policy and citizen action. The task of school reform requires organizing around our shared visions. It requires that we work together to inform and motivate legislators, advise and monitor school boards, challenge and support educators, engage new allies among concerned citizens, raise new expectations among underserved school communities.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the New York Hearing was that it gave a sense that this process is well underway, that the efforts of so many organizations and individuals are linked and mutually supportive. It is our hope that this report conveys the common ground we work on and the energy we can offer each other. If so, we will be a step closer to constituting the broad public coalition that can make quality education a priority for all our children.

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

24-16 BRIDGE PLAZA SOUTH
LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK 11101
(718) 729-8866

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc. (AFC) is a community based organization which works to advance the rights of students and parents in the New York City school system. AFC directly represents youth who have been denied access to educational entitlements. It trains community activists and professionals in education rights and advocacy skills. It participates in social action networks and coalitions to influence education policy, particularly on matters of access and citizen participation. AFC also undertakes and joins in legal action to establish or defend the rights of children to an appropriate and complete education.

THE NATIONAL COALITION OF ADVOCATES FOR STUDENTS

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) is a network of nineteen child advocacy organizations from all regions of the country which work on school issues at the federal, state and local level. NCAS seeks to improve the quality of public education for all students and pays particular attention to issues affecting poor, minority and special-needs youth. The NCAS national office is located in Boston under the direction of Joan First; NCAS is chaired by Stephen R. Bing, head of the Massachusetts Advocacy Center.

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

of New York, Inc.
24-16 Bridge Plaza South
Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

(212) 729-8866